Visit India with Me

By Dhan Gopal Mukerji

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MY BROTHER'S FACE
CASTE AND OUTCAST
THE FACE OF SILENCE
A SON OF MOTHER INDIA ANSWERS
SECRET LISTENERS OF THE EAST
DEVOTIONAL PASSAGES FROM THE HINDU BIBLE
VISIT INDIA WITH ME

For Children

GAY NECK *Awarded the Newbery Medal, 1927*
(Illustrated by Boris Artzybasheff. Selected as one of the best illustrated books of 1927 by the American Institute of Graphic Arts)

GHOND THE HUNTER
(Illustrated by Boris Artzybasheff. Selected as one of the best illustrated books of 1928 by the American Institute of Graphic Arts)

KARI, THE ELEPHANT
JUNGLE BEASTS AND MEN
HARI, THE JUNGLE LAD
HINDU FABLES
THE CHIEF OF THE HERD

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VISIT INDIA WITH ME

Seated in meditation.

VISIT INDIA WITH ME

BY

DHAN GOPAL MUKERJI

Author of "Caste and Outcast," "My Brother's Face," "A Son of Mother India Answers," "The Face of Silence," etc.

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK

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TO MY SISTER

NALINI CHATTOPADHAYA

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A NOTE OF WARNING

BEFORE we begin the following pages I should like to inform the reader of the three purposes which I have sought to achieve.

First of all my aim is to guide the reader to the major works of Indian art, that he should perceive in them the same symbolism as we do. In order to give the guide-book a human interest I have invented an American gentleman through whose eyes we see everything.[1]

Next I have done my utmost to paint a portrait of the contemporary life of my country. In order to do that I have taken advantage of the selective methods of the artist.

Lastly, I have not sought to refute or uphold any point of view about India, but to show what a single visit reveals to a traveler eager to learn of those truths that underlie the surfaces of our existence.

I have not attempted to be encyclopedic, and there is of course much more that might have been said. But, as it is, I humbly trust that it may make a pleasant visit for you to a land, that, no matter how much discussed, remains itself,—holds something unchanged, in a world where change is commonplace.

D. G. MUKERJI

[1] Those who are going to travel through India in case they want to learn of many details should do well to carry Coomeraswamy's *Art of India and Indonasia,* Havell's *Handbook of Indian Art, South Indian Bronzes* by O. C. Gangooly and Murray's guide-book entitled *India.*

VISIT INDIA WITH ME

CHAPTER I

WE ARRIVE

IT must have been four o'clock in the morning when we dressed ourselves and went on deck. The Indian Ocean was a shimmering fire of blue, red, and green. The phosphorescence in the water was so intense that when a flying fish leaped, it drew lightning streaks of colors of the prism after it, until it disappeared under the waves. The ship seemed to be shod with opal fire. Beyond the throbbing of the engine, there was silence everywhere. The sleeping passengers did not know that we were nearing the port of Bombay, but eager not to miss anything, Mr. Eagles and I had left our stateroom to see the coastline of India before the sunrise. As we scanned the horizon, we saw the stars blown out like bubbles into the sea.

Both of us—he, an American, and I, a Hindu—seemed equally intent to catch our first glimpse of India. The minutes crawled like snails. We talked of diverse things as we paced the deck, faster and faster, as if to hasten the birth of the day.

Thus we spent some time, when suddenly we heard a voice, that of a deckhand praying, which told us that dawn was nigh. The man's words were beautiful:

"Harken to the day, to thy prayer, O my soul. May good come to all the world!"

After I had translated the prayer to Mr. Eagles, he exclaimed, "There! That's India!"

"Yes," I said, "India has been mad about God longer than any other country. Look——"

As in a theater where the characters are revealed on the stage at the sudden rise of the curtain, the coast-line of India plunged into our vision as the short tropic dawn burst into day. A giant rising from an abyss, the horns and shoulders of the hills of Bombay became visible in the morning light. Hill after hill, promontory after promontory, gleamed in scarlet and emerald, and the sea opened its petals of gold at their feet. Then the sun, a lion of fire, sprang from peak to peak.

In another half hour we were steaming into port. Color upon color, blue, cerise, gold, and green, surged and swirled in the streets of Bombay. Houses, yellow, white, and violet, reared their haughty brows against the sky, while at their feet thronged a forest of prows, masts and boats. It seemed as if no time had passed before I heard the first Indian words, "O chosen one of Paradise, to what hotel shall I escort you? Enlighten my hearing."

Mr. Eagles asked me to translate, which I did. He answered, "Good! The 'Chosen of Paradise' on first acquaintance! That's going some! Do they talk like this all the time in India?"

The agent of the hotel understood, and he said in English, "Only amongst ourselves, sir; never to foreigners."

Mr. Eagles replied, "I wish you would count me as one of your own and talk to me like that."

And I promised him then and there that I should fill his ears with golden speech wherever we went.

* * * * * *

CHAPTER II

MR. EAGLES

WHEN my American friend, Mr. Edgar Eagles, invited me to be his guide in India during his recent trip there, I accepted his offer with gladness.

It has always been my ambition to reveal India to a foreigner who would see the art, the philosophy, and the people of the country as we see them. India's history is one of the richest. The three living races of antiquity, the Indians, the Jews, and the Chinese, have not only contributed to the achievements of humanity, but, we believe, still have a great deal to contribute in the future.

Mr. John Edgar Eagles had his own notions of India derived from Kipling's "Kim," Müller's "India —What It Can Teach Us," the sacred books of the East, and John Freeman Clark's "Ten Great Religions of the World." In 1899 he was one of the few Americans who took his doctor's degree in Sanskrit poetry under Whitney, whose lectures at Yale University had made him love the culture of Hindustan. Since the year of his graduation, one of the dreams of his life had been to visit "India, the wisdom land." This youthful dream of his had not been obliterated by the following thirty years spent in making money; because of

it, he said, he had been able to endure the strain of severe work.

Now that all his children were at college, Mrs. Eagles insisted on his going to the East at last, and despite all my advice to the contrary, we set sail.

I urged him against it because I believed that dreams generally wither when they are faced with the reality of life. On our way, as we passed Gibraltar, I repeated my warnings: "Max Müller's India is the eternal reality which you don't need to go anywhere to find. It is within you. . . . You are a man past fifty; the discomforts of travel alone will be enough to color your perceptions. Take my advice; let us not go east of Suez."

But all my pleadings failed to convince him. My friend insisted, "I know that India is the opposite of America. That is why I like it. I am going there, not to ask for American comforts, but to make a spiritual voyage of self-discovery. It is an adventure of the spirit. I am in the nick of time—at least, I think I am!"

As we reached the eastern Mediterranean, the enchantment of the East began to enthrall my friend. The magic of the Orient was upon him, but at the same time he was deeply distressed by the apparent poverty and misery of the common people. I warned him at once that he was beginning to judge the East in terms of modern America.

I think it was at Port Said that my friend exclaimed, "How can these Eastern races be content in the midst of such miserable poverty?"

I answered, "You might as well ask the question, 'How can the Americans be content when they are so

prosperous and comfortable?' Don't you see, Mr. Eagles, that poverty and wealth are both irrelevant so far as spirituality is concerned? Your Marcus Aurelius, the emperor, for instance, and Epictetus, the slave, were unaffected either by poverty or wealth. Therefore, before we go any further East, it would be wise to divest your mind of all the American preconceptions of happiness, such as Health, Wealth, and Success, and, on the contrary, to remember the American values of the spirit which will enable you to understand the Orient: I mean plain-living, high-thinking, and spiritual courage."

Just at that moment an Egyptian beggar went by, but after he had gone a few yards, the mendicant, apparently realizing that he had passed two potential victims, turned around and came towards us. His hawk-like face, which had been gleaming with self-satisfaction, suddenly assumed a look of utter wretchedness, and as he drew nearer, he dragged one leg behind the other. This stage-craft escaped Mr. Eagles' untutored sight, and the beggar, discerning the look of sympathy on my friend's face, instantly addressed him: "O tower of benevolence, have mercy on one compounded of distress! O pinnacle of generosity, my father is dead, my mother is dead, my son is dying, and I am starving for lack of food!"

"The pinnacle of generosity" made a great gesture. I could not intercept Mr. Eagles before he had given a dollar bill to the rascal. After salaaming him profoundly, the Egyptian hurried away, and this time one

leg did not drag after the other. Mr. Eagles murmured to himself, "I feel relieved."

Again I began to lecture him on how to see the East without Western sentimentality.

CHAPTER III

ART OF ELEPHANTA AND NASIK CAVES

WE spent a whole week in the city of Bombay. Mr. Eagles had friends to visit, and I had some important errands to do. Except for the cave-temples of Elephanta, which are a short boat ride from Bombay, the city is purely western. We went from one cotton mill to another to find out how the millhands worked. Mr. Eagles was disgusted to know that women and children worked not less than eight hours a day in any factory, and when I showed him the filthy hovels in which the laborers lived, he well-nigh exploded. "This is Hell!" he shouted. "There isn't a single mill town in our southern states that can touch this. And these people have been putting up with it how many years, you say? About a quarter of a century? Well, then you deserve it."

I tried to explain matters to Mr. Eagles. "Industrialism, you know, costs a lot. Wherever it goes it works havoc for many, as well as prosperity for some, and since it has been thrust upon India, India must pay the price. Bombay is our largest industrial city. Therefore, it is the most miserable thing we have got. But if a mother working here gives her babe opium to keep it quiet, we blame the British."

From "Ars Asiatica" III, by Coomerswany Havell and Gohoubev, reproduced by courtesy of Les Editions G. Von Oest.

Temple of Elephanta.

"Still," Mr. Eagles insisted, "you do put up with it. Why don't you pass laws? I understand that the British government raises and sells the opium, but the nation can do a lot by itself."

Again I expostulated. "The common people of India don't make the laws of their country. The machinery of law too is in Christian hands."

To which he only answered, "At this rate, they never will get anywhere!"

Everywhere that I took him outside of the residential districts of Bombay, Mr. Eagles suffered from what he saw. He was so continually worried about the health of the people, that one day I said to him, "We had better see something else that will take your mind off the woes of Bombay."

So we hired a small sailing-boat to take us to the cave-temples of Elephanta which are situated on an island in the harbor of the city. The caves displayed an engineering feat on the part of the ancient Hindus which ravished the mind of my friend. "Do you mean to tell me," he asked, "that they cut a whole hill to produce this temple?"

"It is cut out of a single rock—these mammoth Gods, these rising terraces, the whole fabulous temple nearly two thousand years ago. The pillars are so massive and at the same time so delicate that their very workmanship inspired the Portuguese to call the place Elephanta when they first saw it. By 'Elephanta' they meant that it was as great and as fine as a living elephant. Every piece of sculpture lives. There is nothing dead in this work of art. You would better contem-

plate it in silence," I added, "while I go on to sit in the presence of the Trimurti, a statue of the Hindu Trinity, and meditate."

Before the majesty of the Trimurti, a man is forced to think profoundly.

At sunset as we pushed off the island, we observed how the twilight transfigured the temple. It burned like a garnet monster for a few moments; then gently slid into the rising tides of the blue-black night. Our boatman crooned softly as the wind played in our sails, and Mr. Eagles said, "I don't care what happens to modern India if ancient India is as beautiful as this. What an island!"

"What you have seen is nothing compared with what you have yet to see—the Nasik caves, the caves of Karle, Ajanta, and Elura. I wonder what you will say when your eyes have beheld Elura! There is no greater work of art than that—it is one of the glories of the world."

There was no response from my friend, and I saw that he had fallen asleep, exhausted by the strenuous trip of the day. Ancient India had beaten him in the first battle, and like Napoleon after Waterloo, my friend slept soundly.

The guidebooks present as the unique features of Bombay such places as the Tower of Silence and the Hindu Temple of Worship. I find little that is interesting in them. I recall that when I showed Mr. Eagles the Tower of Silence where the Parsis, Zoroastrians, leave their dead to the vultures who were sitting on a tree, I said to my friend from the United States, "How

still they are! I do not wonder that the Zoroastrians leave their dead for them to devour. Why are they so silent?"

To which he replied, "These birds are more discreet than human beings; they don't make any after-dinner speeches."

Before we leave the city, I should like to explain the origin of the word "Bombay." Some say it is named after the goddess, Mumba, and the proper pronunciation of the word should be Mum-ba-ye. Others say it is a Portuguese name, being "bon," good, "bay," port. No matter how it originated, it has been a city of great misery. Malaria still reigns there. Alcoholism thrives, and opium still spreads its blight among the people. The more the port is dredged and expanded, the more does malaria seem to increase. Though it is one of the rich cities of the world, it is also one of the most miserable. Mr. Eagles and I were only too glad to say "goodbye" to Bombay and go to Nasik, the ancient Nasika of the Greeks.

Nasik is indeed an old city. It is situated on the river Godavari, almost at its source. Step by step, staircase by staircase, it rises from the river bank up to its topmost rampart. Statues of mutilated Gods lie scattered about, much more at home in their homelessness than is a Madonna in a museum. Some of the temples of Nasik are as old as Alexandria and Memphis. It is said that the great Asoka, probably the greatest emperor of the world, received a letter from Ptolemy, the emperor of the Egyptians, on the stone steps of this city. Here, legend runs, Rama, the Hector

and Odysseus rolled in one of India's great epic, lived many years. People have also believed that Jesus Christ spent one of the eighteen unknown years of his life in this city. It is well established that during the time between the age of twelve, when Jesus confounded some wise men in a temple in Judea, and the age of thirty, when he was baptised by John the Baptist, there is no record of his life. In more than one holy place of India people claim that he stayed there and studied ancient mysticism. Whatever the facts, legends like this connected with a place augment its meaning and beauty.

Even remote and modern New York is linked to ancient Nasika. Of this the reader will be convinced by the following from an American daily, in spite of the frequent mis-spelling of Nasik.

The clutching hand of a New York crook, leader of a band which raided a Park Avenue jewelry store, might have linked the underworld of this city yesterday to the India of the days of the British East India Company, but for a soiled envelope.

Reaching into the safe the hand probably touched the envelope. But it was dusty and the robber passed it by. Inside the envelope was the Nassak diamond. It is one of the world's great stones and is valued at between $400,000 and $500,000.

The Nassak diamond once was the single sparkling eye of Shiva, the "destroyer" of the Hindu trinity. It gleamed in the temple to Shiva in Nassak, a town now obliterated but which flourished in 1818 some 100 miles northeast of Bombay. . . .

It had passed to the dealer from the Duke of Westminster, whose ancestors purchased it from a London jeweler in 1828. Ten years before, a British Colonel gave it to the Marquis of Hastings when an Indian potentate was captured at Nassak and

the cyclopean eye of the god, which had mysteriously vanished, was found hidden in his luggage. . . .

"Like Nasika of old, Nasik of today really is beautiful," Mr. Eagles declared as he saw the pilgrims in ochre, violet, yellow and blue descend the temple stairs to their bath in the river. "This is not a city, but a precious metal mounted with burning gems."

I surprised him by saying, "Dear sir, you talk as we do!"

He answered, "If the richness of what I see does not change my vocabulary, then I am a pretty poor American. The fact that I perceive the greatness of your country proves that I come from a great country myself."

I showed him not only the ordinary sights, but the cave-temples and the Shankara Monastery. About three miles away from the city there is a high hill which has been carved and cut into a series of temples. One December afternoon we drove up to the foot of this hill. Mr. Eagles, being a man of taste, said, "Since it was once a holy place, we would better approach it on foot. I prefer to walk the rest of the way, especially since one sees things better by walking."

From below, the cave-temples looked like pigeon holes in a cliff, but as we drew nearer, those holes widened, and soon they became doors, colonnades, and gateways. Every column was cut like a lotus which the sunset gilded into gold. When we reached the top, it was almost dusk. The darkness felt like running still-

ness. I said, "Suppose we spend the night and meditate in the Chamber of Silence here?"

My friend exclaimed, "What! Meditate all night!"

"No!" I said. Meditate as long as we are able." And that settled it.

I will never forget that night. The dusk seemed to pause in its flow as if to take a breath; and instantly like a dove, the moonlight opened its wings and settled upon the hill. It made patterns and silver traceries wherever it fell, augmenting the gloom within the temples and releasing the voices of the insects and the beasts abroad. Bats fanned the air; owls hooted; insects stabbed the night with their chatter; and from far off came the yell of a panther. I began to intone certain words for us to meditate upon: "Mayi sarvam idam protam sutre manigana iva, I am the golden thread of continuity. I am God." I grow from the mineral to the plant, from the plant to the animal, from animal to Man. Beyond man I am He—the ultimate Silence, the secret of the universe. . . .

"Lo, evening comes on wings of silence!
Silence falls over the hills,
Over the full rim of the river,
Into the very hush of the Universe.
Lo, evening comes on wings of silence.
Tone down your voice of mutiny,
Listen to the evening Silence!
Millions of flames, the stars, are lit
For its worship: it is *within* you.
Bring forth the Silence from within,
Pour it on the wounded body of Man
And make him whole.

Listen to the evening silence,
Listen to the hush of the Universe,
Listen to the heartbeat of God."

With those words we plunged into the silence that abides in every human being.

At least two hours passed before we felt the desire to come back to the world.

My experience had run into three phases. At first I was disturbed by the many sounds without, but instead of rejecting them, I told myself that every noise was but a bubble on the ocean of silence. Slowly then they seemed to burst and disappear. My mind and my senses floated clear above the reverberation of the world. Then came an experience of stillness which was painful. For as Nature abhors a vacuum, so the human spirit cannot endure a stillness which is only the absence of sound. There is no richness of content in such stillness. Yet there was a certain amount of peace like that of a tomb. Then slowly, like the drawing of a sword from a sheath, silence began to run through the cave. It must have been long past midnight. There was not a sound stirring in the cold, sharp air, but silence, active and all-pervading, ran through all things.

The ancient caves were hollowed out originally by monks, Hindu and Buddhist, who mounted those hills to find peace. They remained in the mountain caves, and so had to make them habitable. In the course of two or three hundred years they cut the cave-temples—perfect works of art. The silence that abides in them is the most intense that I have ever heard. Even the

sound of a mouse creeping across the floor shocks one with a noise like the cracking of a whip.

After my meditation was over, Mr. Eagles remarked, "I never knew before that repose is an active thing."

"It is always active," I replied, and as if to illustrate what I had said, the dawn light revealed to us a large statue of the Buddha seated in meditation. This image must be five feet tall and is carved out of a strange dark rock; seen in the orange light of dawn filtering through the open gateway it did not look inert, but as though the stone had quickened into intense life —of thought. Rodin with all the contortions of muscles in the statue of "The Thinker" could not produce that sense of the movement of thought and power of serenity which the Buddha enthroned in the Nasik cave symbolized for us.

That we were not two exceptional beings deluded by this image was proven later in the day after we had visited the other caves. On the walls were many other carvings and images, but none held us. Before going down the hill we returned to the first cave to take leave of the Buddha who had by now become more than a friend to us. Just as we were entering we saw some peasants from the countryside bearing flowers to the shrine.

I spoke to them: "O devoted ones, why do you offer flowers to this image and not to the carved deities in the other caves?"

The leader of the procession answered, "Behold, this figure lives. The others have become the stone from

which they have been hewn." He lifted his hand and pointed. "But *He* is not inert. He is indeed the Lord from whose thought creation is born."

When I translated this to Mr. Eagles, he exclaimed, "What understanding!—And this is the culture of the peasants of your country! Ask them what I can do for them."

On my translating my friend's last words, the peasant said, "If you can be friends with us in your thought, that will be enough."

With those words they entered the cave-temple, while we, in order not to intrude our curiosity into their worship, turned and descended the hill.

After sleeping most of the day, I took my friend in the afternoon to visit the monastery of Shankara. Legend has it that this monastery was established by the teacher-philosopher, Shankaracharya. There are many Shankara monasteries like it all over India, where the study of Vedanta and the cultivation of insight into the mystery of existence have been kept up ever since the ninth century.

In order to prepare Mr. Eagles for his visit to the monastery, I related to him the story of Shankaracharya, the founder of modern Brahmanism, as Hinduism is sometimes called.

About the seventh century of the Christian era, when Buddhistic practice had degenerated into mere formalism, new religious teachers arose throughout India to rekindle the flame of Indian spirituality. Within seventy years the greatest of them all appeared. His name was Shankaracharya. He was a Brahmin lad of

sixteen when he commenced his intellectual war on the degeneracy of Buddhism. He began his crusade in the remote south, his birthplace, but his mind was so keen that before he was twenty, he had defeated the southern Buddhist scholars in debate. And according to their agreement made beforehand, each defeated teacher embraced the new religion.[1]

In five more years Shankaracharya had conquered all India. Before his death at the age of thirty-two, he had established his order of monks in every important spiritual center of Hindustan. Around these intellectual nuclei the new spiritual life continues to grow.

The heart of Shankaracharya's philosophy is in Vedanta. He who wishes to know that system need only read the Vedanta Sutra in the sacred books of the East series.

That the Vedanta is one of the greatest philosophical systems of the world has been conceded by scholars everywhere. Like all important philosophies it may be summed up in a few words. The Vedanta proves that the individual (Jivatma) can become one with the Universal Being (Paramatma). But though this is the truth, yet all beings can not attain it through a common experience. Each soul evolves a technique of his own self-realization. One man may realise his identity through worshipping Krishna, another through Christ, still another through idolatry. Therefore tolerance is the first requisite of Vedanta.

[1] Buddhism is a reform-movement in Hinduism as Protestantism is in Christianity. Hinduism also adheres to Buddha's theory of Karma and Reincarnation.

After conceding to each person his right to his own way of finding God, Shankaracharya took care to evolve a technique of meditation and concentration through which highly intelligent souls could realise their supreme spiritual aim. In the Shankara monasteries of India advanced minds are taught the science of meditation as in American laboratories young men are taught chemistry or physics. It was to such an institution that I took Mr. Eagles the afternoon following our visit to the Nasik caves, to meet face to face some of the Shankara monks.

Our route lay through innumerable dusty lanes where silversmiths were working at their trade, brassmiths were hammering brass into graceful cups and pots, and the weaver fretted the loom. All the groups were singing. It is a feature of handicraft in India that men and women sing while they work. They cherish the superstition that as a field will not bear its harvest if it is not watered properly, so the metals, the silk, and the cotton will not blossom into beautiful designs, if they are not fed with song. Song to the fabric is water to the field. "How can beauty blossom where toilers do not sing?"

When we reached the monastery the Abbot received us graciously. He must have been past sixty, judging by his appearance. His head was shaven as was his face, and there was "not a hair on which you could hang a guess" as to his age. But in his movement was the dignified rhythm which comes from deep experience and long life. Since he spoke excellent English, I did not have to interpret for Mr. Eagles. We recounted

to his Holiness what we had felt in the cave. His brown eyes kindled with pleasure.

"You have had the usual experience of the people who meditate in those caves," he said; "first, noise; second, stillness; third, silence. Everything in life is threefold."

"What do you teach here?" Mr. Eagles asked. "How do you train the young people?"

The holy man answered, "They study the six systems of philosophy. They practice charity and kindness to others and they develop insight by daily discipline."

He gave us a detailed description of the life of the monastery. There were over forty monks in the place, of whom five were teachers and the rest students. They rose every morning at three o'clock and practiced the discipline that gives insight. About six o'clock they breakfasted. From seven until ten they worked for those who needed help: succored the sick, and fed the hungry. At mid-day they had their lunch and rest. At two in the afternoon under different teachers, they studied different systems of philosophy. In the evening they took walks and visited the Sadhus, wandering teachers who pass through Nasik, and by ten o'clock all were in bed.

"All of this I can understand except the method by which you train their insight," said Mr. Eagles.

The holy man smiled. The corners of his mouth looked as lovely as a child's. There was nothing but innocence in this man.

"Let me explain step by step," he said. "We start

with the hypothesis given in 800 B.C. that in every man abides his soul whose nature is 'Nitya mukta Buddha swavara.' (Eternal, free, unruffled, all-intelligent.) No matter what else a neophyte thinks of, he must continually remind himself of this. He has within him a peace which can not be stolen nor taken away, and through insistent efforts of 'Vichara,' discrimination, he can establish his identity with Paramatma, the Ultimate Being.

"True judgment, or Vichara, is our first step. Every morning from three till six, when the mind is fresh, the youth gives himself one command: 'I am identical with the infinite repose that is the source of all energy. I shall be full of the energy of peace through my day's activity. I shall release peace from those who come in touch with me. I shall bring peace to those whom I touch, for in them is the same silence that is in me. I am He, I am He!'

"That which a boy practices through all his daily dealings and thoughts for a dozen years becomes in time his character. For after all, what is character? It is but the sum total of habits, and if peace becomes the habit of a man, whether it be in gesture, speech, or thinking, he is bound to exude peace, as a flower gives forth fragrance. So this training in insight is nothing but the forming of habits through the practice of Vichara."

Here Mr. Eagles interposed, "How do you know that the whole universe is peace? How can you say that the root of reality is repose? Where are your proofs?"

The holy man smiled. "Sir, when I was young, I

would allow myself to be drawn into a discussion of this. But I am too old now. All I can say to you is this. If you will remain with us twelve years and do as I tell you, I shall give you the same experience that I have had. There is no doubt that God exists, and that we are God."

"How would you answer the modern charge that this is impractical?" he asked.

To this the Abbot answered with great passion, "If by a certain operation with machinery, I can create a certain product, would you call that impractical? This training in insight is nothing but manipulating the machinery of human consciousness to give the finished product—God-consciousness."

"But," Mr. Eagles asked, "what should we do with God-consciousness in this age of motor cars and radios?"

The master answered, "In the place of those who run from boredom in automobiles you would have highly contented people who travel in them without need to run from anything. Instead of self-seeking talkers on the radio pouring out a cataract of words, you would have spiritual people expressing desirable ideas. Why, it would change the face of the world!"

"I admit that sounds practical enough!" said the American.

Now the Abbot took us about and showed us the bedrooms, the baths, and the study rooms of the monastery. The stone floors shone like mirrors. The hard granite walls which had housed for more than eleven hundred years men meditating on silence, seemed panelled with sanctity. Everywhere there was that—

From "Ars Asiatica" III, by Coomerswany Havell and Gohoubev, reproduced by courtesy of Les Editions G. Von Oest.

Sculpture of Elephanta Caves.

whose "peace passeth all understanding." When we came out of the monastery, we saw women garbed in blue, white, and gold saris, thronging the streets of Nasik. They were going to their respective temples to meditate for the evening that was descending upon the city.

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CHAPTER IV

A CITIZEN OF BOMBAY

THE ridiculous is the only sublime nowadays; we took the night train out of old Nasik and returned to the new Bombay, for there Mr. Eagles had an appointment with a Hindu millionaire, and since millionaires are brothers all over the world, he insisted upon keeping the engagement.

This Hindu Croesus was called Dhunni. He owned many cotton mills in Bombay, part of a railroad in Bengal, and a fleet of ships that did coastwise trade from Karachi to Calcutta. Mr. Dhunni lived in that part of the city called the Malabar Hills, a most exclusive spot in Bombay.

His house, a large one, to hold his eight children and fifteen servants besides himself and his wife, was set in an immense garden where grew roses from Ispahan. Here Mr. and Mrs. Dhunni received us. He wore the usual European dress, while his wife was decked in a saffron sari. In that Hindu setting he stood out as grotesquely as she melted harmoniously into it; but to his credit it must be said that his house was built by a Hindu architect, and it imitated the lines of an ancient palace.

The greater part of Mr. Dhunni's face was hidden

in a white beard through which his almond-shaped eyes shone like two smouldering bits of charcoal. His forehead was narrow. The white hair of his head was almost invisible under his velvet fez. The only thing indicative of his real character was the shape of his hands. They curved like the hood of a cobra. In them lay the power to deal mortal blows.

The contrast between this Bonaparte of Indian industrialism and Mr. Eagles was vivid. The latter was gentle, democratic, and unassuming, while the former, though plebeian to all appearances, was charged with a sense of solitary distinction. He had a resonant voice which rasped every now and then.

At first these two talked about business and mutual business friends. This did not last long. As soon as they had had that finest Asli Indian tea served by Mrs. Dhunni, her husband began to brag—of India's greatness. It, to him, was incomparable: "India is the greatest country, not only of antiquity, but of modern times, too."

If Mr. Dhunni held that India was the greatest country in the world, Mr. Eagles gently insisted that America was second to none. This only poured more melted butter on our host's fire and in turn led Mr. Eagles to mention the ideals of America.

"Personality," rejoined Mr. Dhunni, "America has not. Where is there a sky-scraping person like Gandhi in the United States?"

A pause followed. Mr. Eagles now wanted to know of Gandhi, particularly what Mr. Dhunni thought of him.

Here Mrs. Dhunni spoke, saying quietly, "He could have been as rich as any of us. But he renounced wealth as Buddha renounced a kingdom to find holiness. He is a friend of the lowly and of those who are friendless. Once I begged him to come and sit in this house for five minutes. 'This house will be blessed,' I said to him, 'to the remotest posterity, if you stay here a single moment.' Alas, he never came."

"That, I think," concluded Mrs. Dhunni, "explains to you what we think of him."

The stillness that followed her speech was disturbed only by the cry of the crows and the wind in the trees. Something happened to these people when they spoke of Gandhi.

As if we had touched too deeply the sore spot in them, in order to speak no more of it we went within the house. It was filled with red plush-covered furniture made in England. Amongst ancient models and carvings wrought by the skilful hands of India, reposed settees, chairs, tables, and horrors of every description made by machinery. All the bad European furniture shrieked at once. Moreover, Mr. Dhunni had the habit of patronizing artists in a fashion not wholly unknown to the West. He showed me three portraits, one after another, mentioning their European authors.

Everyone of them was of himself. When I asked him why he had not had his wife painted in Indian costume, he answered, "But she would not consent to it! Three times she refused, and every time I had to sit in her place. But don't you think these are good likenesses?"

And I was obliged to say, "Indeed, they are very good!"

Mr. Dhunni and Mr. Eagles began to discuss the state of health in Bombay. Mr. Eagles said, "What is the reason you have malaria here?"

"It is the result of modern progress," Mr. Dhunni answered. "As the city grows, old sewers and waterways are clogged up and no adequate system has replaced them."

"But why haven't you done something adequate in all these years?" demanded Mr. Eagles. "Look at our work in Panama and Central America!"

Mr. Dhunni pondered a moment or two. As if he had weighed every word before speaking, he began, "I am not eager to say something that will make bad blood against the British government. They are being criticised too much in this country just now. But permit me to quote an Englishman who seems to be very fair. He is no less a person than Sir Ronald Ross, the famous conqueror of malaria. He says: "There are most cheering signs of an awakening in India to the immense importance of subduing malaria. The yearly toll of lives claimed by malaria is more than that of the world war. During the last thirty years neglect to take the right measures on the part of the British Government in India has cost many millions of lives. The local authorities, however, are now beginning to do excellent work. Some of the Indian workers are very capable men. They are of a much finer type than the old, rather fat and lazy 'Babu.' The schemes being laid down for fighting malaria follow in general the lines on which

Malcolm Watson practically cleared British Malaya of malaria." [1]

Those words of wisdom and hope settled the vexed question of malaria. It relieved us all. Now we looked to the Arabian sea where over a solid precipice of violet clouds the sun like a stallion of gold plunged and perished. Almost instantly the tropic night shut down upon the sea.

[1] London Times.

CHAPTER V

MODERN FACTORY AND ANCIENT EMPEROR AND ART

THE next day Mr. Dhunni showed us his warehouses and factories. They won our admiration. In thirty years this man had built up a gigantic industry in the city of Bombay. Badgered and opposed by many British competitors, he had valiantly fought his way to success. He knew every modern device. He had heard of the latest labor law. He had done all he could to ameliorate the deplorable conditions of his workers. I stood in front of this Indian Napoleon and wondered if, after all, the future of India lay in the hands of men of his ilk and not with Gandhi.

In the meantime what I had foreseen came to pass. We were deeply distressed to find boys and girls, not at all healthy in appearance, working nine hours, their mothers working ten, and their fathers toiling sometimes eleven hours a day, in a country where the normal temperature rarely goes below ninety-six in the shade eight months out of twelve. This was aggravated further by the everlasting complaints and communism of the toilers. If they blamed capitalism for all their ills I attributed most of them to India's hot climate which never invented industrialism, and to this day can not

assimilate factories as in the cold climate of North Europe.

The chowls or huts in which the workers lived with at least four or five in a room, had no baths nor toilet facilities. In many places between the chowls ran streams of waste water, as if their odor alone could serve as boundary between home and home. Food was cooked anywhere and eaten anyhow. Old women, unable to work, went about in cheap red and green dresses, with scrubbing pails and pots, on the public road, while children too tender to work, clamored and rolled in dust and dirt like solemn-eyed piglets. Their bodies seemed to steam with smells. In short, it was all so unbearable that my soul began to suffocate along with my senses.

Mr. Eagles, though only too glad of an excuse to go away from Bombay, still doggedly studied the problem of the slums out of a sense of moral obligation. I told the story of the Karle Caves whose beauty was beckoning us all the time. At last, as if the Buddha had heard my prayers for release from the city, we met at tea in Mr. Dhunni's house two Americans who hastened our departure.

An American Buddhist, Mrs. Bolt, had brought her boy of twelve to show him Buddhist India because she had been told that the boy was once a Buddhist monk in Karle. She wished to arouse in him the memory of his past life. Her conviction in this matter was so intense that instead of calling her brown-eyed, dark-haired son John or Dick, she had named him Ananda, Bliss, who was Buddha's foremost disciple.

They had been introduced to Mr. Dhunni by their American banker. Mrs. Bolt was a widow about forty years old, but she looked like a young girl of the Pallas [Athene] type, more a virgin goddess than a human mother. Her son was an utter contrast to her in appearance. Instead of resembling perfection, he was nothing more than a Levantine urchin bent on mischief. That afternoon during tea he had teased the life out of Mrs. Dhunni's parrots and disemboweled half the roses of Shiraz in the garden. How on earth Mrs. Bolt conceived the name Ananda for him passed our understanding.

Anyway, Mr. Eagles and I were soon tied to her chariot. We had to promise then and there that we would take her and Ananda to the oldest Buddhist shrine in India. This produced one beneficial effect: it decided us to leave Bombay and its filthy slums the next day. Later Mr. Eagles informed me, to my gratification, that he could not have endured the sight of innumerable mills and their hopeless employees much longer. The two Buddhists had proven themselves a God-send to us.

On the train out of Bombay, I had the pleasant task of preparing Ananda's mind for the sights and experiences ahead of him. I explained the history of the Asokan pillar that stands in front of the cave-temple of Karle. I told him of the temple which is much older. Then I recounted the history of Emperor Asoka. I had to make it as simple as possible for my listener.

"Asoka," I quoted, "dear Ananda, was one of the great emperors of history. No doubt, he was the great-

est monarch of India. His son and daughter went as missionaries to Ceylon, and converted the Ceylonese to Buddhism, and ever since then Ceylon has remained part of the spiritual and intellectual heritage of India. The emperor also sent missionaries to Europe and to China.

"It was somewhere about 250 B.C. that Asoka became a Buddhist—just after he had waged his war with the Kalingas. There the bloodshed which he saw with his own eyes was so terrible that he put an end to further wars. He proclaimed his remorse on account of the conquest of the Kalingas in these words—'Since during the subjugation of a previously unconquered country, the slaughter, death, and taking away captive of the people necessarily occur, whereat His Majesty feels profound sorrow and regret. . . .' 'The greatest conquest is the conquest by the law of piety and religion.' In diverse places of India Asoka put up and wrote on pillars of granite. Out of the many which were inscribed and planted throughout the country like trees, only about a dozen stone pillars with their writings have survived the ravages of time. One of these rests in Karle.

"Not content with the inscriptions, Asoka formed *Boards of Censors* in the communities throughout his vast domain, to see to it that people practiced the moral law. He built many roads, in order to keep up proper communication with every branch of his empire. With the exception of the Kingdom of Ceylon he ruled almost all India and Afghanistan. This meant a territory as vast as that extending from, let us say, New York

in the East to Chicago in the West, and from Minneapolis in the North to New Orleans in the South. There was no doubt that such a large territory needed an enormous system of road-making. All along these roads Asoka planted fruit trees and shade-giving trees. Not only that, he had wells dug at certain intervals, and resthouses erected, so that people traveling by these roads would not be at all inconvenienced or made to suffer. There were provisions also all along for the relief of the poor and the sick. Asoka had taught most forcefully complete tolerance between religions and communities. He put up his peace-pillars everywhere.

"It was he who made Buddhism the state religion of India. He led an extremely spiritual life. Even his children went as missionaries to different parts of the world. He made his state utterly subservient to the principles of his religion. In his old age he retired into a monastery to meditate and further purify his soul through pious acts.

"Two things Asoka hated: war and intolerance. He thought that these two things arose from people's lack of knowledge of the true religion—the religion of piety —Buddhism. So he sent missionaries to the Greek monarchies, to Syria, to Egypt in Africa, beyond Egypt to Cyrene, Macedonia, Epirus, China, Japan, Korea, and even as far east as the Philippines. Whether any Buddhist missionaries ever reached the New World, by coming across the Pacific remains doubtful, but Buddhism became not only the State religion of India, as under Constantine Christianity became the State religion of Rome, but it gradually grew to be the religion

of almost the entire Asiatic continent, and parts of Europe and Africa. He founded monasteries and colleges almost everywhere, in order to educate the young in the right view of life. Here it may be mentioned that when men went out of India, generally, if not always, they were driven, not by the lust for conquest, but by the desire to preach the truth to foreign nations. In this respect India's record is very high. The spread of Buddhism did not bring bloodshed in its wake.

"The last thing that Asoka did was to establish the Institution of Councils. You recall the Councils of the Church of Rome during the Middle Ages; similar Councils were held by Asoka every few years in different parts of India, to try to make religion better, to make better laws, and to organize the missionary orders of Buddhist men and women. The holding of these Councils lasted long after Asoka died in 232 B.C. With him passed the greatest Indian emperor of ancient times, yet in about forty years after his death his dynasty ceased to exist—184 B.C.

"No story of Asoka can be complete without an account of two missionary children, his son Mahind, and his daughter, Sanghamitta. About the latter my feelings are very vivid, for down the Ganges at a port called Tamluk, the ancient Tampralipta, I was brought up, and there Sanghamitta lived twenty-three centuries ago, before she sailed as a Buddhist missionary for Ceylon. Many are the beautiful tales that I heard in my childhood about that daughter of Emperor Asoka, who disembarked from our ancient village never to lay eyes again on her native land. She is probably the greatest woman missionary of history.

"But let us tell the story from the very beginning. One day, after Asoka's conversion to Buddhism, the Emperor of Ceylon sent an ambassador to Pataliputra. Asoka received the emissary of the southern monarch with due honors. The latter offered the Indian Emperor a handful of the finest pearls from the southern seas. The beauty of these gems of the sea ravished Asoka's heart. He wondered what gift he could send to Ceylon in return. But as his soul and his entire empire were consecrated to the Dharma of Buddha, he said, 'Your Ruler, O wisest of ambassadors, has sent me most precious and most beautiful gifts. In my kingdom grows only one valuable thing, which is the Jewel of Truth. I wish to send to your Mighty Master, that Jewel. Who will go as my ambassador to Ceylon with the Truth of Buddha as a gift?'

"Ceylon was very far away, a month's journey down the Bay of Bengal. None of the bejewelled courtiers responded to the Emperor's call. The Emperor asked again, 'Who will bear Buddhism to Ceylon?'

"Hardly had the Emperor's call reverberated for the second time down the vast corridor, panoplied with fabulous jewels and works of art, when lo! the Crown Prince, Mahind, arose and walked forward towards the throne. The tall handsome heir to the crown bowed, and said, 'Your Majesty, I wish to go as your ambassador to Ceylon.' Asoka was shocked, but he replied pleasantly, 'If you go to Ceylon as a monk, to preach religion, who will rule my empire when I die?' Mahind answered, 'Your Majesty, instead of yourself, I might be the first to die. Please consider me already dead. I do not wish to be an emperor when I may be

the harbinger of Truth.' 'Well spoken, well done!' murmured the courtiers.

"Within a short time Mahind renounced the world and became a Buddhist monk. In a few years, after a thorough training he sailed from Tampralipta for Ceylon. It is said that within two years of his arrival in that island of the south, he converted its entire male population. Then the Emperor of Ceylon had a city built in Mahind's name, where he taught philosophy and religion the rest of his life. This city was called 'Mihintale.'

"In the meantime, the Ceylonese women asked to be converted. But they wished first of all to see and observe how a Buddhist woman lived her life. 'Does her religion make her a better woman? If it does, then we shall accept it.' So saying, they sent an embassy to King Asoka's court.

"On reaching Pataliputra, their ambassador petitioned the Emperor in these words: 'The pearl of righteousness that your son, Mahind, brought to Ceylon has made us greedy. We have come to beg you to enrich us further with another beautiful gift. O, King, we herewith petition you to send us a woman missionary of Buddhism.'

"Their request seemed most difficult to fulfill. Asoka was hard pressed to find a worthy and venturesome woman who would travel so far. At last his own daughter, who, now that Mahind had gone, was expected to inherit his throne, announced her desire to go to Ceylon. It wrung the Emperor's heart with pain. One by one, his children were giving up their earthly ambi-

tions. 'Who will inherit my throne when I am dead?' he thought in his heart; but his lips said, 'Thou hast chosen well thy path, O, my daughter!'

"Before sailing from Tampralipta, Sanghamitta went to Gaya. There she took a root out of the old Bo tree, under which Buddha had obtained illumination. That root she covered with fine clay, and put in a jar. All through her voyage she tended it as if it had been a human child. At last, after a month, when she reached Ceylon, a little plant had begun to sprout out of the Bo-tree root. This she planted in the sacred city of Anuradhapura, very near Mihintale where her brother dwelt. Today if you go to Anuradhapura, you will find a Bo tree vast as a cathedral, grown from the little root of the original one at Gaya. Pilgrims come and sit under it, to feel the serene atmosphere and spiritual calm that reign under its sumptuous boughs.

"Thus ends the tale of Asoka's daughter, who converted the women of Ceylon. And rumor has it that she went from Ceylon to Java and the Philippines, bringing to those remote islands, India's gift of Tolerance—Love—and Wisdom. And here, if I were asked to sum up the quality that distinguished Asoka, I would say—'He was not an Emperor but an Evangel of Peace.'[1] Here ends my story, my dear Ananda."

At last we pulled into Lanaoli, the station whence our excursion to Karle was to be made on the morrow. The rest of that day I spent arranging hotel accommodations and conveyances for all of us. And I must say that certain things that befell the present incarnation

[1] Taken from Mrs. Mukerji's "History of India."

of Buddha's premier disciple gave us our fill of excitement. I shall never be able to forget the snake-charming scene.

As everyone knows, India is a country where the most exciting events descend on one without the slightest warning. After I had arranged everything and settled down to tea with my three Americans on the hotel porch, from nowhere arrived a snake-charming fakir and his neophyte with baskets on their heads and bundles hanging from their shoulders. The boy was as beautiful as a Donatello image in bronze. Alas, his chief proved very ugly. His eyes were like a serpent's and his complexion almost yellow. And ere they could be driven off, they had begun to beat their drum and started their tricks which appealed to Ananda so much that he exclaimed with joy something about dogs being hot. What fun it was to watch him and hear him cry, "Hot dog!"

The tall magician at first did nothing very extraordinary. He opened his programme with the usual burying of a seed of mango into the ground. Then he spoke volubly of magic and sprinkled water over the buried seed. Next he spread a scarlet sheet over it, which a few seconds later he lifted, and lo! the seed had grown into a small tree laden with fruits. Amazement filled Ananda's little body, as he lay curled up in his chair. The next item of the magician's programme proved that he had deftly picked our pockets during the mango trick. Now article by article he returned to Mrs. Bolt her trinkets, to Mr. Eagles his purse, and to myself my watch. How and when he had taken possession of them we shall never know.

Now the little Donatello chap put his fingers to Ananda's nose and squeezed it. Lo, the boy sneezed out two eggs and a rabbit. There was no doubt now that we were seeing some first rate artistry. The boy magician sang a song of triumph.

Hardly had Ananda recovered from his recent surprise when the basket trick began. The old wizard smoked a pipe full of blue weeds. It smelled like opium-smoke. After seeing that his apprentice had placed a basket before us, the master stopped smoking. Amid weird chants and all kinds of gesticulation, he took the lid off it and showed us the hollow in the basket. At a signal from him his boy climbed into it and crouched. After making sure that we had seen everything he replaced the cover. Now after cutting some fantastic capers and chanting furiously in the most unpleasant falsetto tone, he opened two little baskets from which emerged a pair of cobras. At the songs of the wizard they coiled the lower half of their bodies, and then raised their heads and began their dance. The instant our eyes were focused on the half-raised bodies of the swaying reptiles, the artist rushed to the big basket and opened it. Lo! the thing was empty—the Donatello creature was not there!

"Where is he? Where is he?" clamored Ananda.

Lo, there he was on a neighboring treetop! We were stunned with amazement at the trick played before us. And as fate would have it, the success of his trick had pleased the fakir himself so that he stopped his song. The worst happened—in an instant one of the cobras had run away somewhere in the field, while the other came up to little Ananda and raised its head to strike.

The sight made the magician turn green with apprehension. "Taro, taro," he screamed to Ananda in Hindi.

I translated, "Ananda dear, sit still, quite still."

The boy instead of heeding us, slowly uncurled himself in his chair and then very quietly stretched his foot down before the viper.

The reptile seemed to understand him. Instead of becoming frightened and stinging through the boy's canvas shoes into his toes, the creature stayed as before, his tongue flicking the air frequently. But this was not the end. As we sat frozen in our places afraid to move lest we enrage the cobra, Ananda, who had been sitting on his other foot, slowly thrust that one too before the snake. Now, fortunately, something else happened —a sound. The snake shivered through his entire frame as he heard it. And we noticed that the serpent-charmer's boy had climbed down from his perch. We knew not how he had secured a flute from among the bundles on the ground, but he was playing a shrill tune on it. Strange though it may seem, the reptile had heard the painful music before we human beings. His cowl had already shrunk. Instead of being flat and glossy like a magnolia leaf, it became small as Ananda's hand. Inch by inch, down and down, it went, till it reached the ground. At last drawn by the imperious fluting, the serpent crawled back into his basket. However, the entire thing had given Mr. Eagles a shock.

* * * * * *

The next day, since Mr. Eagles had a headache and

felt wretched, Mrs. Bolt, Ananda, and I went to Karle. As the automobile sped on I asked Ananda about his experience with the snake. "Why did you put your feet down?"

The lad smiled sweetly and said, "I was sure that if I showed him I was not afraid, he would not hurt me."

Before such faith my skepticism fled like a dog from a wolf. I let the boy think as he liked. That he had the Buddha-Compassion for all animals, I could not doubt. Maybe he was a reincarnated Buddha monk, after all.

But in a few minutes his mother and I were both disillusioned about Ananda's memory of his Buddhist past. Before the tall Asokan column, as well as inside the great rock-temple, he showed no sign of interest. He was bored by everything we showed him. Not a single memory came back to him across twenty-four centuries when I translated the inscriptions of Emperor Asoka.

Seeing that Karle had failed to be of any significance, the next morning Mrs. Bolt took the boy on a journey to Benares. There she hoped to meet a holy man who might give Ananda a knowledge of his past.

Two days later, after Mr. Eagles had recovered, we took a tonga pulled by one horse and set out to pay our homage to Karle. Though we were pressed for time, my friend considered motoring to the cave-shrine sacrilegious. His reverence far surpassed mine.

We drove through a grove of bamboos interspersed with scented acacia, where the air was fully fragrant

though it was December. Soon we went by the poor-houses of a village. I asked the driver why the people looked so poverty stricken and the houses were so bedraggled.

He thought a moment and replied, "These people do not belong here. They are animals. The real people have left the country-side, seeking their fortune in the cities. Only the patient and the servile are left behind, and they are always miserable. Even the houses they dwell in are miserable. Until the strong and the enterprising return to rebuild these villages, they will always remain so."

"You have no compassion!" I said.

"Why should I worry others with my compassion," he answered, "when I need it for myself?"

Just then we arrived at the foot of the hill, and after resisting the clamorous offers of sedan-chair carriers, walked up to the cave-temple. On reaching the top, Mr. Eagles was amazed by his first sight of an Asokan pillar. We felt as if behind it stood the Emperor himself in the flesh.

When we put our hands on this pillar in Karle, two thousand and three hundred years broke like a bubble at our touch: we stood as if face to face with the greatest monarch of history who had sent out over the years his messages of peace to our age as he did once to Egypt, Syria, China, Ceylon, Asia Minor, and Greece. If our modern world would only heed this ambassador of international peace!

Silently I led my friend away from the Asokan pillar to the shrine of peace behind it, which was a vast moun-

tain cave carved into a temple. Its vault was supported by teak-wood [2] beams centuries old. The shrine must have existed before Asoka. Its aisles, pillars, and walls were saturated with a larger antiquity.

No doubt the emperor had planted an inscribed pillar here in order to exhort the pilgrims about to return from their visit to this ancient shrine. He wanted them to think and act peace in their daily life. He wanted to drive home the thought that the temple itself had afforded the pilgrim an immersion into the great active peace of God which he should not only love but keep burning forever within his soul.

As a gateman of the King demands tribute, the spirit that abode in Karle made us think of "Buddham me saranam, Dhammam me saranam, Sangham me saranam." In order to obey its command, Mr. Eagles and I traversed the aisle, and after reaching the altar at the other end of the shrine, sat down to meditate. Peace poured upon us from pillar, vault, and wall. The very floors worn out by the pilgrims' feet seemed to thrust up peace like a fountain.

When we came out, Mr. Eagles refused to take any photograph of the place, saying, "A photograph would tell nothing. The real picture is in my mind. My hand will remember that it has touched Asoka."

With these words we began our descent. Even the voluble tonga driver who had been with us all this time did not dare to speak.

[2] The teak-wood of this ceiling has not yet been eaten by age.

CHAPTER VI

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REFORMERS

FROM Lanaoli we went to the city of Poona, which is the heart of Indian social reform on the western coast. Almost all the leaders of modern political unrest were born and brought up in this city. Men like Gokhale and Tilak are world famous. Gokhale was probably the greatest statesman of the British Empire next to Balfour and Campbell-Bannerman, but because he was born of a subject race, he spent his time either in minor work for the Government, or in opposition to the Government when major issues were involved. Had India been like Canada or Australia, Gokhale would have arisen to as high a place as General Smuts or Sir Wilfred Laurier.

Though Gokhale co-operated with the British Government his old teacher, Tilak, was against any form of co-operation with the British. Long before Gandhi, Tilak foreshadowed many of the features of Gandhism, but in one thing he remained opposed to Gandhi; he approved the use of violence, believing that in warfare bravery demands the exercise of force on either side. Imprisoned more than twice by the British Government even in his old age, his spirit never broke.

Before we can understand the social and political reforms achieved by the large province of Bombay, we must be familiar with three movements. The Servants of India Society founded by Gokhale, the Women's Seva Sadan, and the Fergusson College all originated in Poona, the spiritual centre of the province of Bombay. The last named institution is an old nationalist college, named after a friendly Briton of the last century. Here all the teachers, genuine patriots of high education, teach for a salary of fifteen dollars a month the promising youths of the province. Men like Paranjape, a senior wrangler of the University of Cambridge, have taught at Fergusson for a mere pittance when they could have commanded a thousand a month elsewhere: there is no question here of people's love of learning and patriotism. It was at this college that Gokhale studied and taught. It was here that Tilak grew up and taught. The Indian Women's University was an offshoot of the Servant of India Society. It is sponsored and carried on by the people themselves, soliciting no aid from governments or municipalities. It began after the Servant of India Society had spread political education and the message of social reform.

In his old age Gokhale gave up teaching at the Fergusson College in order to organize the Servant of India Society and to found the Women's College. He gathered together and created a group of men and women who would work for the constitutional and educational advancement of India. How fine the men he trained can be was shown to America in the person of Srinivasa Sastri who represented India at the Wash-

ington Conference during the Harding administration when the three-power Naval Agreement was made.

Everyone noticed Mr. Sastri's noble character. He has been the head of the Servant of India Society since Gokhale's death in 1915. If the latter were alive today, England and India would not be at loggerheads as they are now.

During our stay in Poona we were guests of the Servants' Indian Society, all of whose members are still leading a consecrated life. Under the able guidance of one of them we were taken to Hingna, where the Women's University is situated.

There are about 250 girls here studying modern science, and ingrafting it into the ancient Hindu wisdom. A number of them were qualifying as doctors and nurses.

After we had entered the tall walls, we presented ourselves before Mme. Parvati who received us. She was a woman past sixty, but had the ability and the strength of a young girl. She was dressed in a white sari. Under its veil her prominent brow, her eagle eyes, strong chin, and finely modelled jaws showed a woman of especial character. Her voice hardly rose above a whisper, and in the stillness of the afternoon we heard every word she had to say.

After showing us through the dormitories, the lecture rooms, and the laboratories, and when we were seated on the floor of the dining room waiting for our tea, she told us this history of the Women's Movement of the western coast.

"It was some forty years ago," she began, "when I

became a widow with a son and a daughter to support. I looked in every direction for a livelihood. In those days the lives of Brahmin widows were hard. Like all other Brahmin women of the time, the arts of social grace and the rules of administering a household I knew, but I had been taught to look down upon manual labor, and now I did not know which way to turn in order to feed the two hungry mouths of my young.

"In my perplexity I went to my brother-in-law, Professor Karvhe. He was a poor college professor and could not help me financially. All that he could do was to teach me foreign languages and modern science. As I progressed in my studies, I heard of four more women situated as I was. In my enthusiasm I invited them to share my instructions under my sister's learned husband. This, you might say, was the beginning of the Seva Sadan or Women's Service Movement. We taught ourselves knitting and weaving and other manual arts. Within a year we were able to make things with our own hands and sell them at the bazaars for a livelihood. Now that we had attained this success, the half-dozen members of our group decided to do missionary work among others like us who needed succor. Thus, in twenty years' time our membership rose beyond a thousand, and now, as you know, it goes beyond 10,000. Our organization has branches all over the western coast. As our daughters grew up, for their sake we had to build graded schools, high schools, and a university. Thus, we recognized necessity, not as a stumbling block, but a spring board from which we leaped into adventure and success."

There was something so profoundly moving about the old Brahmin widow's history that Mr. Eagles then and there made a large donation to the cause of women's education.

If any American wishes to study the strength and magnitude of Indian social reform, he should not miss Poona. Here freedom of women, abolition of caste have been established and religious intolerance and lack of education are things of the past.

CHAPTER VII

ELURA TEMPLE

OUR visit to Karle seemed to quicken something in Mr. Eagles who had read many works on the sculptures of Elura and the fresco paintings of Ajanta. He was all excitement and could scarcely wait to visit these two shrines of art and religion.

Our guide from Bombay had telegraphed that a message from H.R.H. the Nizam was waiting for us and we hastened thither to learn whether we were permitted to visit Elura and Ajanta by the Nizam since both of them were situated in his territory of Hyderabad. This time, as on all the other occasions, luck was with Mr. Eagles.

At our hotel in Bombay we found the invitation of His Highness to visit Elura and stay at the Government's guest house. I think this was the first time my friend had received an invitation from an Indian potentate, and his imagination on fire, he pictured royal hospitality in palaces of gold and ivory. But Elura is an out-of-the-way place, and all that the most kind-hearted Indian prince can do is to put a person up at his guest house. I said again and again, "My dear sir, there will be no amber and amethyst walls, no peacocks decorating the housetops, nor elephants on plots

of gold; it is an arid, hilly place where holy men went to worship in ancient times. You may be entertained with the comforts of a second-class American hotel there. That is all that the Nizam can do for you."

But still he insisted, "Oh, there will be at least one elephant, I am sure! After all, we are in India, you know."

When I reminded him that we had traversed by now almost six hundred miles without seeing an elephant, Mr. Eagles said, "It is all the fault of Mr. Ford. His cars are driving the elephants out of business."

After a nine hours' train journey from Bombay, we arrived in Daulatabad, the nearest railway station to Elura. The station-master took charge of us and led us to the bungalow, the guest house of His Highness, the Nizam, near the station where we camped for the night. Since Mr. Eagles insisted upon conversing and not sleeping, I told him some of the ghost stories that were current about this particular guest house, and the more I told, the more he wanted to know, so at last I said, "What if a departed spirit should be listening to us at this moment!"

As if to bear out my assertion, there was a strange tittering noise in the dark. It sounded as if someone were really eavesdropping and laughing at us. Instead of frightening my friend, it whetted his curiosity and he said, "I am going to chase this ghost."

"He may live up a tree," I replied.

But I could not dissuade him, so lantern in hand I had to lead him around the entire building in futile

search of a spirit that would not turn up. There was not a sound anywhere, and I who wanted to sleep, and Mr. Eagles who wanted to lasso a ghost as a cow-puncher in Wyoming lassoes a steer, talked at cross purposes until the day broke, which was signaled by the crow of the station cock. Since the sun rises swiftly in the tropics, in a few moments all was illuminated by the white light of dawn and the keeper of the guest house approached us for his baksheesh (tip).

Said I to him, "Last night when our feet felt the dust of your village, when our loneliness clamored for companionship, when we needed your lynx-like eyes to guard us through the darkness, where were you, O demander of baksheesh? Baksheesh, my friend, is not a live fruit to be shaken down from a tree by anybody. Baksheesh is the diadem of endeavor. What have you done to make us crown you with ten cents?"

But Mr. Eagles exclaimed, "Look here, I am hungry and I am tired, so cut out your talk! Give him what he wants and tell him to go to Hell!"

"But," I said, "he cannot go there yet. First he has to find the automobile that is to take us to Elura."

The American insisted, however, that I use fewer words and more speed. I acceded, saying to the man, "Let the lightning be your pace. Hasten back to the chariot-keeper and bring him as swiftly as a man with the noose around his neck slips from the plank under his feet."

The fellow wandered away saying, "I hasten to please the heaven-born."

"What is he doing now?" Mr. Eagles demanded.

On my explaining that he was hurrying, my friend said, "He must be suffering from locomotor ataxia."

In half an hour the man, the automobile and its driver reached us. I flung eight anas ($.16) at the keeper of the guest house and we drove off. In half an hour more we reached the fortress of Daulatabad where the automobile driver proposed that we have breakfast. He clambered off the car and disappeared inside the fortress. I am not exaggerating when I say it took him one hour to return with another man and a tray filled with breakfast things.

"Why did it take you so long?" I asked.

"Because," he blandly answered, "my brother-in-law has no cows of his own, so we went up the hill, caught a she-goat and milked her, since the heaven-born must have milk with tea."

In spite of this, the tea saturated with goat's milk, and the toast tasted very good to both of us. After paying the brother-in-law his due, we drove toward Elura. It was by now nine o'clock. The country was covered in a haze of iridescent colors. In India the air becomes so heated that sometimes it vibrates in iridescence. The automobile snorted and crawled up the hillside like an aged elephant. Do I prefer elephants? I must say this automobile did it better. In another half-hour we were at the palatial guest mansion of His Highness, the Nizam, in the village of Elura. Since we had not slept the previous night, the servants left us in peace until two o'clock in the afternoon. Then began the fun. Six servants took charge of Mr. Eagles and seven others

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Just a little of the outer corner of Elura. Note man standing by him, some idea of the scale of the temple can be obtained.

took charge of me. We were bathed and scrubbed and fed. Everything tasted as if made by a chef in Paris, and on my asking the chief servant what the charges were for paying guests here, I was told, "Three dollars a head and five for two."

Mr. Eagles, devouring his last slice of mango, said, "I don't believe for a minute that Hindus are incapable of efficiency."

As the swift December cold was pouncing upon the valleys like a panther, I proposed to my friend to visit the temples. After receiving my guarantee that we would not meditate there that day, Mr. Eagles followed me. I took him a round-about way. We descended kilometer after kilometer, and then knowing exactly where we stood, I said, "Shut your eyes and turn around."

When he did so, it was as though he faced the seven wonders of the world.

Imagine to yourself a hill which in over six hundred years had been hollowed and cut into a temple. How did the workmen know two thousand years ago what was the grain of the rock, what its formation, where to begin upon it, how to end? We shall never know their secret. Like wizards of old they took it with them. But how excellent it must have been we could now gauge by the fruit of it that appeared before our dazzled eyes. Tier upon tier, cave upon cave, serried colonnade after colonnade, Elura rose. Cut with as much delicacy as a jewel and wrought with such spiritual fervor that every stone and every image was living, Elura was not religious; it was religion. Knowing that my friend was

in the grip of a tremendous impression, I left him alone and went within, climbed those many stairs and reached the Chamber of Silence. In this room there was no sculpture, no drawing, not even a scratch upon the walls—only Silence, which poured down like water upon me. Soon I heard someone's footsteps, and knowing that it was my friend looking for me, I came out to meet him.

"Do you know what time it is?" I said, "Five o'clock. It is growing dark."

Two hours had passed very swiftly. Two feathers had fallen from the wings of time and vanished into oblivion.

The central temple, Kailasa, must be two acres deep and five stories high. Around it are cut galleries and colonnades. Almost all the walls are sumptuously sculptured and every shape is the size of life. The first story is devoted to animals, pythons, life-sized elephants, and tigers; the second is filled with images of men and women; the third with gods, those winged beings who flit in and out of this twilight as if they were stone become life, and above them stands the high shrine guarded by tigers, which is consecrated to Silence. In India Silence walks like a tiger. This is the heart of Elura.[1]

As from the human heart the blood is pumped to the rest of the body, so from the Kailasa radiates innumerable caves and galleries. For hundreds of years men have worshipped here. It seemed that the religious his-

[1] Elura has been spelt variously. Ellura, Ellora, Elora and Elura are names of the same object of art.

One of the inner shrines of the Elura cave-temple.

tory of India from the first to the seventh centuries were written in such clear symbols that even a theologian could not misinterpret them. We spent nearly a week in Elura, day after day, studying bits of sculpture and meditating in the Silence-shrine. When it was time to go, Mr. Eagles said, "I shall tell no one about this place. It is too precious to be exposed to the eyes of tourists."

And in truth, Brahm, the Creator; Brahm, the Invisible; Brahm, the Silent, speaks here.

CHAPTER VIII

AJANTA FRESCOES

FROM Elura one can go by motor to the caves of Ajanta. They are separated by sixty miles of hills and valleys traversed by good roads built and maintained by the Nizam of Hyderabad.

On our way to Ajanta, Mr. Eagles and I pondered the engineering feat of the ancient Hindus. They not only cut hills into temples, but erected gigantic structures with stones from Indian quarries.

But instead of two travelers, let us consult Dr. Coomerswamy of the Boston Museum, who says with authority, "Indian art has all been made by hand and with the aid only of what would now be regarded as very simple appliances. Yet in architecture they had means of moving gigantic blocks of stone; steel already was in use 2,000 years ago; such large masses of iron were forged 1,500 years ago as could only have been dealt with in Europe towards the end of the nineteenth century."

From engineering we drifted to art, religion, and the artist's place in life, leading us eventually back to the story of the temple we had just left behind. Mr. Eagles and I tried to reconstruct the history of Elura. Legend has it that the Titans carved these temples, and his-

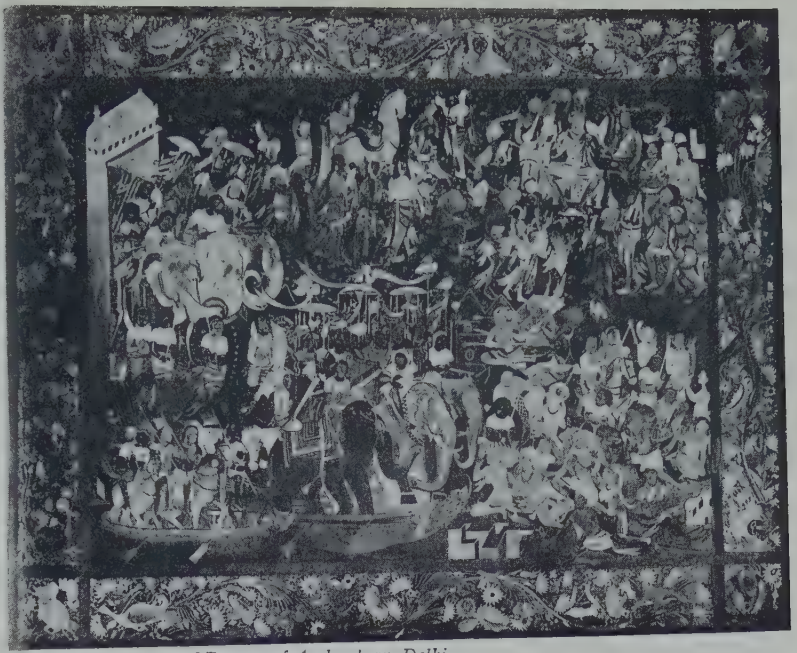


Photo by permission of Bureau of Archæology, Delhi.

Ajanta Fresco.

tory is witness that only Titanic minds could have wrought such wonders. There is another legend that a king was so impressed by the Himalayas in the north that he ordered his architect to hew out of these southern rocks a new Himalaya. Those who have seen Elura will testify that man has been as successful as nature.

About 200 B.C. monks went to these hill caves to meditate and occasionally when they had had a mystical experience, they carved the record of it in the walls of their cells. When the Brahman aristocracy rose to its pinnacle of power about the end of the first century A.D., many of the monks decided to cut a whole temple out of the solid rock. It is said that it took over a hundred years to release from the shapeless mountain the perfect shape of Kailasa. Then other temples followed radiating from it, until the close of the sixth century. But since we do not count the minutes in the presence of eternity, why establish the date of a timeless work of art?

If Elura is a paradise of sculpture, Ajanta is the Valhalla of painting. Here rising above a river appears a scarp of rock in which holes have been cut no larger than nests of pigeons; but as the visitor climbs up to them, they assume the proportion of high gates to the cave-temples. About twenty-two centuries ago, Buddhist monks began to paint the walls of Ajanta. The whole life history of the Buddha has been preserved in colors and lines as fiercely impeccable as the stripes on a tiger. It is told there as clearly as in the Pali canonical writings—how the Lord was born, how he grew up, how he came to renounce the world, and how

he found salvation for all mankind. Fresco after fresco has preserved the sacred legend.

Mr. Eagles and I tried to compare what we had seen with something in Europe. Chartres with all its colors and Seville Cathedral with its infinite depth and mystery came to our minds.

"This is the same impersonal art," said Mr. Eagles, "as in Europe of the middle ages. Until the Christian religion, which came from the East, had touched and transformed us we did not begin to create like the makers of Ajanta and Elura. How closely medieval Europe and India resemble each other! As my friend, the greatest Hindu art-critic, says, 'We think nowadays of art as a special activity practiced by a very few people called "artists" for a not much more numerous class called "lovers of art." In India, art and manufacture were not thought of as separate things, and everything, from a statue or a painting down to a kitchenware or shoes had a quality that we now call artistic. But the people who made these things, though they constituted a professional class, did not think of art as requiring peculiar personal qualities—what they believed in was not genius, but talent and workshop training; they did not have personal ideals, they produced what everyone needed and used, working for money, not starving heroically in garrets. Artists were expected to be good and pious citizens like other people. They were organized in guilds (something like trade unions) which regulated wages, hours of labor, quality of workmanship, and community charities. They spoke of art, not in terms of values but as good or bad, skilled

or unskilled workmanship, and knowledge of proportions and materials. The idea of art for art's sake, if they could have grasped it, would have seemed to them a monstrous and vain product of individual human vanity.' " [1]

"But, dear sir," I asked impatiently, "is there any one thing in Europe with which we can compare these frescoed shrines?"

"Let us not seek comparisons," affirmed my friend. "Let us enjoy these temples in their own terms."

[1] Dr. A. Coomerswamy.

CHAPTER IX

TERRITORY OF A NATIVE PRINCE

AT Ajanta Mr. Eagles and I decided to separate for a week while he visited the modern city of Hyderabad. Since he had a letter of introduction to the woman poet, Sarojini Naidu, who speaks better English than any man living, I did not need to accompany my friend as his interpreter.

I felt sure that Hyderabad with its poet would mean much to Mr. Eagles, and to tell the truth, though I was most eager to see "silver-tongued" Sarojini of Hyderabad, I could not yet wrench myself away from the gods of Ajanta.

The hills of Ajanta, the silver thread drawn at their feet by the river, the guest houses of the prince, and the village of only a dozen families, clung to my spirit. Even now they press upon my memory—not only the tiger-strong art of Ajanta but all the rest. My seven solitary days passed quickly. I hired a car to take me to Hyderabad to pick up Mr. Eagles.

Hyderabad is built as an artist mounts a gem. Growing on the scimitar-curve of the river, like pearls and sapphire rose the many minarets and royal palace of the city.

Since India manages her climaxes well, the spectacle

to greet my eyes in such a city was an enormous elephant procession. The driver swiftly parked our car at the side of the moving throng and standing on its roof we watched Hyderabad work its witchery of colors.

It happened to be the occasion for H.H. the Nizam's departure for Calcutta, where he was to enjoy the New Year's holidays. "Leisurely elephants" caparisoned in crimson, green, and purple passed. From "latticed balconies" women dressed in a thousand varieties of exquisite muslins looked down on us. Men in turbans, violet, green, amber, and in long flowing white chogas (coats) thronged the two sides of the road against white, yellow, and jade-colored walls. Between them the elephants streamed down the streets—an immense sea of jewelled monsters.

The last elephant had passed, the crowd had dwindled, the Muezzin's calls for prayer had just cut the air, when I was roused from my reverie: "Well, friend Mukerji," came the voice of Mr. Eagles, "what a sight! You arrived in time to see it. Most fortunate!"

It did me good to hear him praise Hyderabad, not only then, but the following day during the entire journey from there to Bangalore, the capital of the neighboring native state of Mysore. We were still motoring, but this time in a Minerva that belonged to a prince of the blood who had put it at the disposal of my friend.

Mr. Eagles began from the beginning. "I am glad you sent me here alone. Sarojini Naidu gave me an insight into Hindu womanhood which I cannot be grateful enough for. In the West, you know, we have

no notion of the veneration and appreciation of womanhood that people possess in this country. As the poetess told me, the worship of woman is everywhere. She took me to the temple of Durga, the mother of the universe; to Lukhmi, the Goddess of Abundance; to the house of Saraswati, the Goddess of Poetry and Wisdom. Wherever we went, I was struck by the symbolic expression that to the average tourist is a sealed book. Why, the whole country speaks in symbols! As in the Roman Catholic Church woman is worshiped in the person of the Virgin, so is she reverenced in India in these Goddesses. I did not understand before your attitude toward your women. The fact that no Hindu discusses a woman with another man shows the racial taste born from feeling.

"Another thing I learned from Mrs. Naidu and the many women I met at tea at her house which interested me equally, was the amount of progress the feminist movement had made in the country. They told me that throughout the whole of southern India women go about as freely as in Spain or Italy. A great deal has to be done yet, of course, for easier divorce laws and a more widespread literacy, but the progress achieved recently gives ground to hope that in another twenty years the last vestiges of women's disability will vanish. They have already disappeared in Turkey; they have disappeared in Japan and Siam. It looks now as though old India were on the warpath! Judging by the Goddesses and their history, the women of the past were free to express themselves; and as it was their past, so it may be in the near future. I am hopeful

about India now. Can you tell me why Hyderabad is so cheerful a place? he added.[1]

Then, after thinking awhile, he answered the question for himself, saying, "I know why. There is no conflict of races in the territory ruled by its prince. The Indian element dominates. The few British officers, very few indeed, are subservient to the ruler's wishes. There are eleven million subjects, most of whom are Hindus, ruled by a Mohammedan prince, and contented to be ruled by him!

"The poetess told me that the ruler has made education without charge compulsory up to a certain age, as in the United States. He has established a university where you are taught in your own language and not in the language of England. There is hardly any malaria in this state and people do not look as sick as they do further north."

"I wonder why," said I.

Mr. Eagles somehow had acquired from the poetess an uncommonly acute sense of the Indian situation. In one week's time he had learned to penetrate the veil of Indian life more successfully than a foreigner wandering by himself would have done in years. After pondering the matter a while, he answered my question, "I guess the reason why you have less ill health in this place is due to an emotional serenity. There is no race war; here the English don't despise the Hindus and the Hindus don't fear and hate the English. I am a bit of a Christian Scientist, you know. All our troubles come from fear. In this territory eleven million people do not

[1] See Appendix.

live under a race fear; therefore, you have no race diseases. People do not look so decrepit, sick, and helpless. Even thin people, tired people, weary people, seem to have a glow about them. I guess it is due to their mental freedom.

"But it is clear that the British spare no pains. They insistently told me, and I met many of them in various places, how hard they were working; yet, wherever they rule the people directly, the appearance of the community is deplorable. I am convinced it is not due to criminal neglect, corruption, or anything of the sort. It is due to evil emotions in the long run."

"What about the beauty of Hyderabad?" I interrupted.

After pausing a moment as if to recall the scene from the depths of his memory, my friend said, "Hyderabad is to Bombay what Vienna is to Chicago. Sumptuous elephants, terraces, balconies, parapets dating from the fourteenth century, people going about unhurried—there wasn't a single angry face in the bazaars, though they were all clamoring and bargaining, and no face showed the marks of worry. The poetess gave me two poems," he went on with enthusiasm, "one about the bazaars of Hyderabad."

"Permit me," I interrupted Mr. Eagles, "to quote it from memory."

"Do," begged my friend. "That poem can tell one the whole truth."

So I recited:

> "What do you sell, O ye merchants?
> Richly your wares are displayed.

Turbans of crimson and silver,
Tunics of purple brocade,
Mirrors with panels of amber,
Daggers with handles of jade.

"What do you say, O ye vendors?
Saffron and leather and rice.
What do you cry, O ye maidens?
Sandalwood, henna, and spice.

"What do you make, O ye goldsmiths?
Wristlet and anklet and ring,
Bells for the feet of blue pigeons,
Frail as a dragon-fly's wing.
Girdles of gold for the dancers,
Scabbards of gold for the king.

"What do you cry, O ye fruitmen?
Citron, pomegranate and plum.
What do you play, O musician?
Cithar, sarangi and drum.
What do you chant, O magicians?
Spells for the aeons to come.

"What do you weave, O ye flower-girls?
With tassels of azure and red,
Crowns for the brow of a bridegroom,
Chaplets to garland his bed,
Sheets of white blossoms new-gathered
To perfume the sleep of the dead."

After pausing a while, Mr. Eagles commented, "That gives one the visual beauty of Hyderabad. . . . But is that all India can offer? I am beginning to notice now that what we see is beautiful, but what we cannot see is more beautiful yet. I am growing more and more sensitive to the invisible in this country, whether in the

gold caparison of an elephant or the purple toga of a nobleman. Beauty is charged with an invisible reality. I cannot explain; I cannot even tell you what I perceive. What we see is nothing compared to what we do not see. As you would say, the invisible crouches like a panther in the visible beauty of India."

CHAPTER X

MYSORE, A HINDU KINGDOM

MYSORE is half the size of Hyderabad. Its population does not even reach five million. If measured by quality, on the contrary, it is probably representative of the best six million people in India, and probably equals any group of six million people anywhere else in the world.

Here again Mr. Eagles visited those to whom he had introductions, and through whose eyes he saw the kingdom. He and I saw only one place together, and that was in the forest near the great waterfalls of Mysore, second only to the Niagara, where I led him to the holy man of the Pariahs called Guru-Narayana.

While we were motoring towards the falls where Guru-Narayana was staying, Mr. Eagles told me of his experiences in Mysore.

"First of all the Maharaja himself—what a man!" he exclaimed. "Clear-cut as a sword, so humble, so reticent—yet when he does open his mouth he has something to say. He seemed to speak out of depths—that god of bronze! Straight nose, eyes like the Indian night full of calm mystery, strong chin, broad forehead, and alert like a young stag! I am learning to speak like you! It must be contagious! But what a man! He told

me that in twenty-five years' time, he had raised the literacy of the state from 10 per cent to beyond 60 per cent. There is no malaria in his kingdom, none of the diseases of the north, and what health in the people! I visited the co-operative banks, the schools, and the colleges. Everywhere there was health and radiance. There was no hate between the rulers and the ruled here."

"There are few places in India where such a large number of people are as happy and creative," said I.

"I think it would be wiser for me to stick to these native states if I want to see the real India," went on Mr. Eagles. "What enthusiasm they have got here! All the factories and workshops labor in accord instead of in discord. As for the women, they are free and early marriages are hardly known. In the Hospital, they told me the average age of motherhood is seventeen, and seventeen in the tropics is like twenty in the latitude of England."

In order to find out how much credit is deserved by others beside the Maharaja, I asked, "But did you meet the Prime Minister?"

Mr. Eagles continued, "Did I! Imagine, my boy, a Mohammedan Prime Minister of a Hindu king! If I were to judge from my impressions of Mysore and Hyderabad I would say all these Hindu-Mohammedan quarrels that we read about in the newspapers are as true of India as the stories of the gang wars in Chicago. Hindus and Mohammedans are living in harmony in this kingdom as in Hyderabad. Over there the ruler is a Mohammedan and here the ruler a Hindu."

"The same is true in Kashmir where the subjects are 70 per cent Mohammedan and the ruler is a Hindu, his co-religionists numbering 30 per cent of the populace," I told him.

"When I talked to the Prime Minister of Mysore," went on my friend, "I was deeply impressed by his loyalty to the state and to the Hindu prince. The fellow is a great statesman. If he were in a country like America, he would get the position of State Secretary without doubt. What an understanding of practical problems!"

Again I had to interrupt, "What are his future plans, Mr. Eagles?"

"He told me that he wants illiteracy wiped out altogether in another decade, complete democratic institutions such as universal franchise, and not franchise on the basis of property, and last of all a synthesis of industrialism and agriculture. The amount of progress they have made in the revival of handicraft is strengthening. This is the only state where every peasant has two industries—agriculture and weaving. In those months of the year when they do not work in the fields, they weave, so there is no need to go hungry in case the soil fails them, but the irrigation system is so good that the soil is unlikely to fail a peasant anyway. Gandhi's idea of spinning and weaving has made great progress in this kingdom! No wonder that all look rich, contented, and healthy." [1]

After I heard the statistics, I asked, "Are you convinced now that Gandhi's idea is not crazy?"

[1] See "Young India," Nov. 29, 1928.

"Well, at least not in the case of Mysore," my friend rejoined. "It has proven to be practical. Here a whole state through its machinery of law, has put into operation Gandhi's idea of the spinning wheel. Every peasant is safe from starvation if his crop fails, because he can sell his woven goods. This has convinced me that Gandhi is not as crazy as he is made out to be. In this instance certainly, he is very practical."

We were passing just at this moment through the ruined city of Halibeed, which was sacked some five hundred years ago by foreign invaders. It is said that it took six months to carry the loot from India to Persia. Be that as it may, the ruined walls were far more beautiful than any city standing erect. Seen in the iridescent haze of a hot tropical morning, the ruins were garbed in magic. One could imagine palaces, lakes, nay, stables made of granite where ten thousand elephants were housed! The enormous courtyard of the royal palace where tournaments were held surrounded by latticed balconies through which noble ladies watched their favorite knights unhorse one another, was more picturesque in ruins. The courts of justice erected of sandstone and marble and granite; the palaces of the royal princes seemed to rise from the debris. This was ancient Halibeed. Is it dead? Halibeed is not dead. In ruins, it will live forever.

As we left it, Mr. Eagles exclaimed, "That reminds me of Saringpatan, where the head of the Mysore State Bank took me the other day in the Maharaja's automobile. Temples and gods thronged everywhere. Some temples were as massive in construction as a mountain

and wrought as delicately as the wings of a beetle. I am so sorry that you did not go to Saringpatan with me. This city of sixteenth century India will always live in my dreams. Some temples crouched like lions. Some stood up like stallions, and others were quite simple—adorned like wild flowers. Oh, that Saringpatan, and now this Halibeed! What's that?——" he interrupted himself suddenly.

"That is the boom of the waterfalls, Mr. Eagles."

The car stopped abruptly and we walked toward the surge and thunder of the falls above the river, a massive topaz leaped from a furnace of flaming green and plunged like tawny lions hurtling down a precipice.

Half a mile away from the waterfall dwelt the holy man, Gura Narayana, the Master of the Pariahs. First of all, who are the Pariahs? They are a separate indigenous race of the south whom the Brahmin Hindus conquered thousands of years ago. The conquerors imposed upon them the virtual status of slaves. Their slavery consists in not being allowed to draw water from the wells which the Brahmins use, or to walk on some of the thoroughfares, or to enter any Brahmin temple.

Now in recent years, next to Gandhi, the person who has done the most to ameliorate their conditions has been Gura Narayana who, though a high-caste Hindu, never observed caste.

After introducing my friend, I left him to have his private talk with the master, since the latter spoke English.

On my return about half an hour later the Guru

told me of my thoughts. I had better describe the entire scene as adequately as I can.

Narayana [2] was seated cross-legged. One could not accurately gauge his stature. His body was wrapped in a large woolen "chudder," dyed in yellow. His neck though long was not thin. His chin was pugnacity itself. The entire lower part of his face together with the tenderest of black eyes under his Jovian brow made him look like a compassionate wolf. His hair was like spun white silk. . . .

But before I had uttered a word, he said, "Why do I fight for the Pariahs against my own caste people? Is not that the question in your mind?"

"How . . . how did you know it?" I stammered, but, ignoring my childishness, he went on.

"I had my spiritual experience some thirty years ago. In it I was shown the essential equality of all creatures. Every soul revealed itself, not separate, but identical with Brahma, the Absolute. After such an experience, what was left to me, but to preach not only man's equality with other men, but his equality with God?

"At first the Pariahs would not listen to me. So I drew disciples from the high-caste Hindus. These became my staff. On them I leaned. They went forth to live among the outcasts. Now that the illusion of seeing a snake in a rope had vanished, many Pariahs used our help as an honest gesture. Thus they escaped from their own dungeon of fear and suspicion. Then they in

[2] Since the death of Guru Narayana has taken place I see no reason to withhold printing his real name above.

turn became messengers to others. Schools, model villages, and good roads were made by them wherever the thought of Advaita—Man is God—traveled. That was all. What vitality you notice among the self-freeing Pariahs is their own creation.

"For instance, in Vaikom city several years ago, when Gandhi helped the outcasts to win a number of their long-denied rights, many of the men were my associates."

"What happened in Vaikom?" asked my American friend. He was all agog.

Narayana told the story of the famous Vaikom "Satyagraha." "Gandhi was very ill after his release from jail. To recuperate faster he decided to come from Bombay to the city of Vaikom. It is situated in the country of the Pariahs whom the Brahmin oppress. Its thoroughfares are not allowed to be trodden by the Pariahs—at least, not the main thoroughfare. These people, in order to traverse a road about a mile long had to go roundabout, crossing canals, taking ferry boats, under all kinds of weather. A Brahmin walked the road in half an hour and got to the end of it, but a Pariah had to go around. It took him two hours. That gives you approximately an idea of the hardship endured by the Pariahs. Though Gandhi was very ill, he could not resist the temptation of being useful to the sufferers of Vaikom.

"When the Pariahs came to him, he could not turn them away. Of course, he made them pledge to practice non-violence. Now, you know the difference between non-violence and passive resistance. Passive resistance

is passive because the resistors do not happen to possess arms and weapons. But non-violent resistance is resistance without resorting to weapons even when they could be easily obtained. Violence is not permitted in thought or feeling, let alone action.

"On Gandhi's demanding such a pledge as this my associates and the other Pariahs asked for a little time to prepare their entire community. It was easy, for all of us had done strenuous social-reforming in Vaikom for the past half a dozen years. With sincere zeal and great thoroughness they set about to purify their emotions. How often they sang this song of Gharati's as they toiled at their trade:

> " 'Love them that hate,
> Love them that hate, my good self,
> Love them that hate.
>
> Enveloped by smoke burns fire,
> Have we not seen this, my good self?
> Enveloped by hatred burns love,
> Have we not seen this?
> Our Lord is there.
> Love them that hate.' "

"Who wrote it?" Mr. Eagles interrupted, wishing to know more.

The master answered, "Bharati, the southern Brahmin poet. He is working with us. Not only by words but by conduct, he is demonstrating the abolition of caste. He is a genuine artist.

"Anyway, singing, meditating, and working, the right state of being was created in all. When the entire

community felt quite prepared, they set a date for invading the main road of Vaikom. You can imagine the anger and the contempt with which the Brahmins received the news.

"After selecting twenty of the most spiritual Pariahs, the social reformers sent them to enter the forbidden road at an auspicious hour. . . . I shall never forget that day. Picture to yourself the twenty brothers whose ancestors had always run from the Brahmin's police force, now advancing against it, chanting the name of God. The police looked puzzled just an instant. Then at a signal from their chief, charged. Their bludgeons fell like hail on the twenty Pariahs. And yet the latter advanced. Not one of them retaliated. Not a single one ran away. What a miracle!

"The next day another twenty advanced on the same road. This time instead of bludgeoning, the police arrested and imprisoned them. Thus, every day over a dozen new Pariahs offered non-violent resistance. That went on for nearly sixteen months. When the Brahmins and their police saw the outcasts' spiritual quality and moral stamina, they were stupefied. At last they agreed to abandon their ancient privileges. What a triumph of the soul over materialism! An age-old wrong was righted without leaving any bitterness as its after effects. Of course, those sixteen months tested us all."

Here Mr. Eagles commented, "All that you need to do in India is to win your rights in your own way, as David used his own method, instead of Saul's, against Goliath. If the East could only stick to its old ways!"

"Does that explain," I asked Mr. Eagles, "what Gandhi means by non-violent resistance?"

The Guru pondered a moment, then unburdened his mind to us. "It is an Easterner's way to achieve his own ends. Certainly the preliminaries should not be overlooked when a community sets out to fight for its ends with non-violence. It must spend some time purifying its thought and emotion of the slightest taint of violence, fear, and hate: for 'Yadrisi vawana yasya,' as Krishna says, 'A man acts what he has felt.' No doubt, in Vaikom and other places, the preliminary period of thinking and praying made the non-violent action a perfect success. Superficial souls do not understand the need of prayer and fasting before action. Non-violent action must emerge from non-violent feelings, non-violent dreams, non-violent thought. Otherwise the action has no meaning, nor any strength."

A deep silence fell on us. The power of what we had heard seemed to manifest itself in our midst. We now realised the all-compelling character of the Guru's presence by the fact that during all the time that we had been talking with him, we had not noticed his surroundings. Now we saw the thatched roof of his hut to the right, the "Pupeel" tree against whose trunk he sat and the few young men in yellow who were sitting on his right and left. They no doubt were the master's disciples. With the exception of two faces one could tell by their prominent noses and high foreheads that some of the youths were not Pariahs. Yet they and the two Pariahs were living in fellowship with their

teacher. That spoke volumes to Mr. Eagles's mind. Later on he summed it up.

"Imagine our southern gentlemen and negro youths living like brothers in Virginia under any saint whatever! This sort of miracle is possible only in India. No wonder Kipling says, 'India is the only democratic country in the world.' "

By now the holy one had resumed his speech, again making our surroundings vanish from our notice: "Equality can become the essence of a social order whose members have had spiritual experience. How can men practice brotherhood when they have not experienced the fatherhood of Brahma? If we exist as long as Brahma dreams, we can practice equality with one another when we have clearly experienced our sonship to the dreamer. There is no other way."

"In short, these boys of different social strata," rejoined Mr. Eagles, drawing our attention to our environment, "are able to practice brotherhood because they have had experience of their common father—God. But I am interested in your calling the Creator a Dreamer. In the West the philosophically inclined symbolize Him as 'the Thinker' in whose mind we, the creatures, function as ideas."

After pondering my friend's statement for a few moments, the Blessed One asked, "Is the Thinker infinite or finite?"

Mr. Eagles answered, "Infinite, if He is the source of all created existence."

With the faintest touch of cunning, Narayana smiled before he said, "That makes Him out as

Dreamer. If a thought-process becomes infinite, it will not have a design. Design of time, design of space, design of first cause and last effect will cease to work in an infinite process of thought which will turn it into the likeness of a dream which unsettles space, the order of time, and the fiat of causality. Hence, when you call Him the Infinite Thinker, you have said as little as when we call Him Brahma, the Eternal Dreamer. Those who have experienced that. . . ." Suddenly the Guru became silent. He shut his eyes almost with an audible suddenness. Now in the air we heard the boom of the waterfalls, the shaking of winter smitten boughs of the trees and the shrill cry of an insect.

Something told us from within that our interview was at an end. As we rose to our feet, the master opened his eyes, looked at each one of us in turn blessing us with Sanskrit words, "Agraga bhavata—may you stride forward. May you make progress."

Slowly we trod our way back to the waiting automobile, led by a young man named Natarajan. He said to Mr. Eagles in English, "The Master, whenever he needs rest from hard work in the towns, comes here or to similar places for rest. He always takes ten or twenty boys with him from all classes. Several days after he is refreshed, he begins teaching and training his young followers. In that way he has produced scores like us. In all my life I have seen him five times. The first time at the age of ten I met him in my father's house. He told me stories. Three years later, when he came again to Trivandrum, our town, he started exactly where his stories had previously ended. Similarly

when he visited us on my sixteenth year, he resumed his instruction from where it had been interrupted. The fifth and latest occasion of my meeting him was now when he brought me hither. Now my training is complete."

"Is this true in your case only?" asked Mr. Eagles.

"No," smiled Natarajan, showing his white teeth. "I am not the only one. Almost all the intimate disciples were trained as I have been. How is it that he never forgot any of us and never resumed his teachings in the wrong place?"

With that question Natarajan became silent. His face looked like a south Indian God's and its serenity told us of the result of his training. Mr. Eagles, ever sensitive to spiritual beauty, felt it deeply. At the automobile we bade farewell to Natarajan as if we were parting from a brother. Such is the power of spiritual sympathy: it builds friendships in terms other than those of time and place.

"How is it that in India people speak of their spiritual experiences so easily?" asked Edgar Eagles.

The main thing we discussed on our way back to Bangalore city was the power that a holy man exerts on the Indian masses. We shall never know the exact reason of it, because half the time we cannot grasp the meaning of what a spiritual man like Narayana describes as his philosophy.

As Mr. Eagles phrased it: "I can't understand half of what he said, but maybe you can explain to me the sum of his obscure sentences. In appearance Narayana seems to have been made by the chisel of Michael

Angelo. He is the most masterful man I have seen since my visit to Mussolini. No wonder he has stirred up millions of Pariahs to improve their own condition and to reform the Hindu religion from within. That fellow's jaw is like a hammer. Every time he spoke his voice was golden, but the words were steel."

"Have you ever seen such eyes?" I asked. "I always feel, when I look into them, as though I were sitting near a tranquil lake in which I could see reflected the core of the sky, the secret of my soul."

"I did not know exactly how many strides India has made in social reform," continued my friend. "How is it that only religious men like this man can stir your people?"

"In India," I answered, "we once put our faith in the politicians and they disappointed us. We put our faith in the bankers and they deceived us. We put our faith in educationalists and they turned in our hands like a double-edged instrument. So in utter exasperation we went back to our saints, and judging by this man Narayana and Gandhi, we did well when we chose them to lead us. Only three million Pariahs know Narayana, but they, at least, do not cringe before the high caste Hindus. They ask no advice. They strive on. They build their own schools. They have built their own spiritual life. I hope India will reveal to the world in the near future that holiness is a more practical power than economics. It can move mountains."

The evening was upon us, and as we were entering the city, darkness fell. In the dim lane before us a Moussafir—wisher of Good—was passing, swinging a

lantern and singing at the door of every house: "Ya peer mowla mooskie asan—O God, remove all evil from here. O God, let good abide upon this threshold."

"Does this man do anything else but this?" asked my friend.

"By day he probably works as a carpenter," I replied.

CHAPTER XI

WE START FOR MADRAS, THE CITY OF SHIVA NATARAJA

AFTER revisiting the abundant works of ancient art of Seringapatam and other places in Mysore State, we were impelled to go to Madras, the capital of the British province of that name, for purely artistic reasons. All the sculpture that we had been seeing hitherto pointed towards the Nataraja, an image of Shiva dancing, in the Madras Museum. Every God or Goddess that we had looked at hitherto, though speechless, seemed to speak of the perfection of Nataraja. It was very strange.

Mr. Eagles summed up the matter thus: "As you travel in Italy, everything hints at Rome. Whether in Siena or in Venice, you hear the hidden yet ever recurrent suggestion from stone after stone and canvas after canvas that only Rome can fulfill your expectancy. Similarly, all the works of South Indian sculpture point at the Nataraja. Let us look at him without further delay."

So we hastened to Madras.

* * * * * *

Madras is probably the oldest British city in India. The Englishman, Thackeray, lived some time there.

From "Ars Asiatica" III, by Coomerswany Havell and Gohoubev, reproduced by courtesy of Les Editions G. Von Oest.

Nataraja, at Madras Museum.

The American, Elihu Yale, one of the benefactors of Yale University in New Haven, made his money in Madras, part of which he gave to the institution of learning named after him. A hundred years ago American clipper ships went from Portland and Salem by way of the Horn to Madras for spices, silk, Indian linen, and Kashmir shawls. The Anglo-Saxon tradition of Madras, though not very old, yet is very strong. And side by side with it flourish many conservative Brahmin traditions. The differences between Pariah and Brahmin have existed here with unabating fury none knows how long, yet it is not unusual to see today Pariahs and Brahmins rubbing shoulders in the bazaars, in the railway stations, in the courts of justice, and in many schools. Fifty years ago a Pariah could not cast his shadow on the Brahmin without polluting him. They did not share the same temple, the same street, or the same school. Now fortunately owing to Gandhism they are learning to work together. Since it is an English-speaking town, I did not feel it necessary to accompany my friend wherever he went in Madras. He had a letter of introduction to Srini Vasa Iyengar, the leader of the Indian Independence Party. I am afraid the Nationalists here tried to fill my friend's mind with long tales of India's grievances.

When in ten days, he thought he had learned everything about sociology, education, and the sanitation of the city, he begged me to show him Nataraja, the finest work of art in Southern India.

It will amaze the reader to learn that this greatest piece of Indian sculpture reposes in the heart of Mad-

ras, and yet traveler after traveler goes through the city without seeing it.

It is a two-foot image of the god Shiva. Though not the only image of the kind, it is the only one accessible to all. There are many statues of equal worth, but they are hidden away in Hindu temples where no foreigner is allowed to set foot. Photographs do no justice, nor words, nor pictures. If we could conceive all existence as a succession of moments, if we could conceive the entire solar system as the flickering of a candle flame, or the delicate dancing feet of a God, then we might imagine the statue of the Nataraja. The significance of this treasure of the Madras Museum may be illustrated by this contrast: if I were to describe the art of Egypt, I would say it has created everything but a dance of the Gods; if I were to describe the art of Greece, I would say it has created everything but the movement of the universe; so I have looked east and west, but nowhere do I find a statue that renders the rhythm of all reality except this one. But all comparisons are tongue-tied for the dancing Nataraja alone compares with the Nataraja. Not only orientals but occidentals who have appreciation and insight find the dancing Shiva an incomparable work of art.

Here are a few sentences from Rodin's own lips on the excellence of the Nataraja.

> Displayed in life, in the stream of life, in the air, in the sun, the consciousness of being is everywhere in profusion. So the Art of the Far East appears to us.
>
> The divinity of the human body was obtained at that time, not because they were closer to the origins of mankind, for

From "Ars Asiatica" III, by Coomerswany Havell and Gohoubev, reproduced by courtesy of Les Editions G. Von Oest.

Nataraja, dancing Shiva, Madras Museum.

human form has remained unaltered; but the servitude of today thinks it can free itself in everything; and so we are out of our orbit; therefore taste is lacking everywhere.

From a certain profile the Çiva becomes a delicate crescent.

How much talent is expressed in the pride of that body!

Today the beauty of this bronze is unchangeable. The movement of the light is imperceptible. You can feel those immovable muscles, all in sheaves, ready to spring up should the light move.

The shadow moves from place to place and fashions the masterpiece, giving it its charm. Its profound delicacy comes from a long-standing mysteriousness.

The reality of the soul which has been imprisoned in this bronze has captivated innumerable generations. Its eyes are going to see; it is about to speak; its mouth is longing for eternity.[1]

[1] Translated from Ars Asiatica by E. Tatiane Gougoltz.

CHAPTER XII

KESHAVA, THE NEW HINDU OF A NEW AGE

AFTER we had left the Museum, Mr. Eagles exclaimed, "Can you tell me what is happening to me?"

"What do you mean?" I asked in bewilderment.

"I understand the Nataraja perfectly," he said. "Once you see him and all that he stands for—you don't worry about the meaning of Life or Death as understood by your race. I feel as if I knew India's very soul."

"Explain," I said.

"You see," he commenced, "so far I have seen in India the static aspects of life as represented by the meditating Buddha, but now I see the other half of it—the dynamic, the dancing Shiva. In short, throughout the ages, Indian life has held the balance between the two. The balance between repose and unrest has never been tipped.

"I learned from my wanderings among the political leaders, the educationalists, and the feminists in this town that you have not exhausted yourselves throughout the ages as we have done in Europe. The Greeks exhausted themselves and went out of existence. The Romans tipped the balance and had to die. The French

aristocracy was exhausted, and the French Revolution wiped it out.

"But when I turn towards this country, the Brahmins and the other castes still maintain their balance. The Pariahs have not driven out the Brahmins, nor has the Hindu race died out to give place to another. There is some inner balance by which conqueror, foreigners, and immigrants have been checked and held in equilibrium by the consciousness and the conduct of this race. And when I saw the dancing God and compared him with the meditating Buddha, I comprehended the situation. Am I right?"

"Yes," I replied, "And that is why I have always said that America has to learn from India that to be active, men must also be serene. There must be a balance between the two. Serenity and Activity should be the two faces of the same medal. That idea impels my continual writing and lecturing in America. You are a young race building for a future more immense than the past of India, and the life of the Americans must synthesize action with serenity. But go on," I begged, "with the tale of your experiences."

He laughed and said, "You know, I am beginning to acquire a detestation of all social reform, political revolution, and sanitary inspection. I have been with men who are trying to bring about changes in these matters here, and if you try to study what they are about, your brain grows blue-moldy."

"Is it as appalling as that?" I asked.

"I will be frank with you," he began all over again. "The Madras municipality which is controlled almost

entirely by Indian Nationalists is at the present moment bending its efforts toward the Herculean task of doing in five years what has been left undone for fifty. They want to spread education everywhere as in the kingdom of Mysore. They want to teach spinning and weaving to all. From Mr. Iyengor down they talked of nothing but India's glorious past, her ignoble present due to British rule, and her glorious future after the British have been driven out.

"As an American, they thought I would be very sympathetic to the revolutionary ardor, but I told them frankly that our American Revolution is so far behind us that we have had time to question the expediency of the weapon. In fact, I was cynical enough to suggest that the average American finds more kinship with the superb arrogance of Rudyard Kipling's imperialism than with the revolutionary emotion of Patrick Henry and Jefferson. Ho! Ho! You should have seen how that put the fat in the fire. They told me they were following America's example. They were duplicating the Boston Tea Party, the boycott of British goods, and the increase of American hand-weaving. Not only that, they quoted to me our own sentences which read like Gandhi's writings."

I broke in and asked, "How did you crawl out?"

Mr. Eagles replied, "I was cynical enough to tell them that both George Washington and Lincoln have become our deities and that like all deities, they are reverenced but never imitated. Though our country was founded in revolution, 'innocent of irony,' we condemn all revolutions whether in Nicaragua, Haiti, India, or

Ireland. I had to be blunt with these people. They have strange ideas in their heads. They think the Americans will help them in their fight for freedom. Can you imagine such innocence! And then they tell me Americans are naïve—your Nationalist Hindus can beat us by a mile! Financially speaking, our interests do not conflict but interlock with those of Great Britain."

"But what about the tangible results, Mr. Eagles?"

"Well, they are not bad," he answered, "judging from the little time they have had the Madras municipality in their own hands. The Indians have really done very well. They naturally cannot overtax their own community. They must depend on the British government for money with which to finance the schools and clean up drainage. There is no doubt that in five years' time they have made tremendous progress. But I wish I was back in the state of Mysore where the Indians do not speak continually of their grievances against England. Here the emotions are sick. There is no doubt about it—at the Governor's the British told me I should dismiss all these nationalistic programs as so much tosh. Over there at the house of Iyengor I was told that the British would leave India inside of two years. Nowhere did I find any serenity, mutual trust, or mutual respect. No wonder there is so much disease in the country."

I asked him frankly, "Tell me the truth: what is wrong with India—It is not the schooling, not anything that you can see?"

"Shall I tell you the truth?"

After looking at me intently for a few moments, Mr.

Eagles continued, "The people are afraid. There is cowardice everywhere. The Pariahs are afraid of the Brahmins; the Brahmin is afraid of the British, and the British despise the whole lot of them put together. Since fear is the maker of disease, India will never have sanitation or schools or self-government unless she is healed. What you need in this country is a man like Jesus who drove evil spirits into a herd of pigs that perished in the water. India is possessed with the evil spirit of fear. I wonder who will drive it out—who will heal her?

"But now that I have seen the Nataraja, I grasp that the balance of life remains undisturbed in the Indian consciousness and I am not dubious of the future, nor frightened by the present. The inner consciousness established in undisturbed equilibrium will create that which will give back India her own."

In order to show my friend a Madrasi who had interlaced action with meditation, I took him to Keshava, a banker who had renounced wealth and entered the Rama Krishna Ashrama.

The grounds of the Ashrama in Mylapore were a delight to the eye. The large building accommodating many students of all ages was immaculate and beautiful. Set in green gardens, the white edifice appeared like a pearl set in the heart of an emerald. After sauntering through the grounds and traversing sunlit porticos, we reached the room of Keshava, the holy man in charge. Since Keshava was an Oxford graduate, I had no interpreting to do. He was a man after Mr. Eagles' heart. Despite his yellow robe, Keshava was no saint

of the stained glass quality. Slender-waisted as a leopard, his chest and shoulders betokened the physique of an athlete, the shaven head, neck, chin, mouth, eyes —in fact, everything about him—symbolized strength. Seated on the tiled floor, cold and hard, surrounded by walls white and bare, this one-time rich banker attended to us like a king holding court.

Since Mr. Eagles wished to learn his history, Keshava had to begin from the beginning. He spoke of his life as if it was somebody else's.

"When I had graduated from Oxbridge, to use Thackeray's phrase, I came to my native state of Mysore. There my ruler employed me to organize the cooperative banks for the peasants. First of all I married, to pay my debt to my ancestors. Being a Brahmin by birth I did the thing ordained. My four children came inside seven years. They settled my pitri reen—obligation of continuity to my forebears.

"Just after the birth of my first child two things happened to me simultaneously. First of all, I met Swami Vivekananda, and almost the next day I read in the papers that Chicago was going to hold a Parliament of Religions.

"I had known England already. Now the papers brought news of America. I said to Vivekananda, 'Why don't you go to Chicago and represent Hinduism at the forthcoming Parliament of Religions?' He answered, 'If my God, Rama Krishna, wishes it.' So my friends and I set about collecting funds to pay his passage to the United States, and after begging from door to door for a month, we succeeded. It was not a prince's

stipend, but the common people's money that sent him to America. The potter, the peasant, the weaver, and the Pariah financed Vivekananda.

"On his return to India nearly two years later, he paid a visit to me in Bangalore. Seated in the presence of my wife and my parents, he recounted the noble qualities of the United States. You will never know how he loved the Americans.

"Suddenly like a bolt from the blue, he hurled a tremendous question at me, 'My boy, will you follow me?'

"Imagine me, a married householder, asked to renounce the world so suddenly! Instead of hesitating, I gave my answer with equal suddenness, 'In my time, blessed sir, I will follow you.'

"That closed the issue. In 1922, when my youngest child had graduated from college and entered business, I asked my wife's consent to take the begging bowl. Poor woman! She bore it like the true Brahmin that she was. After a fortnight's prayers and meditation, she said, 'Yes, you promised your master, I remember. I must help you to keep that promise. Your time has come to take your staff, my Lord. The gods have spoken.'

"So I went to the monastery in Belur to receive my initiation. Then, because all my life I have built banking concerns, I was sent here to this students' boarding house as an administrator. With Vivekananda's blessings, we have acquired athletic fields, workshops, study of western science, and old Hindu spiritual exercises. Does not this presage the coming marriage of science

and mystical life—the welding of East and West?"

At this point he rose to show us around. In spacious workshops were revealed students of diverse castes working together. On the fields youths in a medley of costumes and from a medley of castes were playing every kind of games. From there we went to an infirmary where the sick were being taken care of.

Not far off rose the haughty roof of the college buildings whence students were coming back to their hostel after studying modern medicine and other sciences.

Keshava walked like an elephant as he took us from place to place answering our questions. I remember Mr. Eagles asking: "But so much training in modern science, would it not undermine the boys' faith? In the West science seems to hurt people's belief. It is bound to harm rituals and rites."

After walking very quietly for a few paces, the holy man said, "At first, in the rudimentary stages, science may upset faith. That is to be expected. But as the intellect develops through the discipline of science it is bound to understand the meaning of faith, of the profound significance of all that the eyes cannot see and the mind cannot penetrate. Thus the intellect will become religious once more. This can be attained only by the man who pushes science to its limits and reaches a new level of consciousness, to which metaphysical truth appears as the world of nature does to the eye or the world of concepts to the intellect. Rites are desirable because they stimulate the re-creations of religious content.

"The Indians have overcome the static concept of truth, and replaced it by a dynamic one—the extremest profundity has been attained here. Though their social order seems utterly static, that does not warrant the conclusion that their consciousness too is the same."

Though we did not understand all of what he was saying, Mr. Eagles and I were charmed by Keshava's willingness to explain his ideas. After inspecting the Ashrama, we had tea with the master. It was toward the end of the tea ceremony that Mr. Eagles asked, "What of your wife, Holy one?"

Taken aback Keshava asked, "My wife?"

"What happens to her while you seek God?" exclaimed my friend.

"Oh," answered he, "that is her affair with Him. In the meantime, if she finds Him, she will come and initiate me into the Vision. And in case I find Him first, I will return home and give her the Supreme Secret."

"Either find God or. . . ." Before Mr. Eagles could finish his sentence, a deputation of boys came to wait on their master. Since they had come by appointment we took our leave.

We walked home late in the afternoon, preferring to march where the naked pearl-fishers were coming up from the sea. They were riding thin, long logs that were borne in by the lazy, landward roll of the waves.

As soon as they had reached the shallow waters, the fishermen bounded off their planks, pushing them forward to ride on the crest of a swell to the gold-red sand of the beach. Now half swimming and half walking

they sought to reach the shore. Slowly their bodies, almost completely bare, rose higher and higher. Against "the green walls of the sea" they stood like Tritons hewn out of amethyst.

The contemplation of their noble nakedness drew our mind back to the half-bare holy man we had just left. His last words were still ringing in our ears: "Here we are successfully combining science with soul. India's future is safe. The synthesis of physics and metaphysics that we have wrought out will command the admiration of all who understand."

As Mr. Eagles said, "The Nataraja, the dancing God of action, must harmonize with Buddha, the God of contemplation, if the two halves of the human spirit, whether here or in the West, are to live in peace."

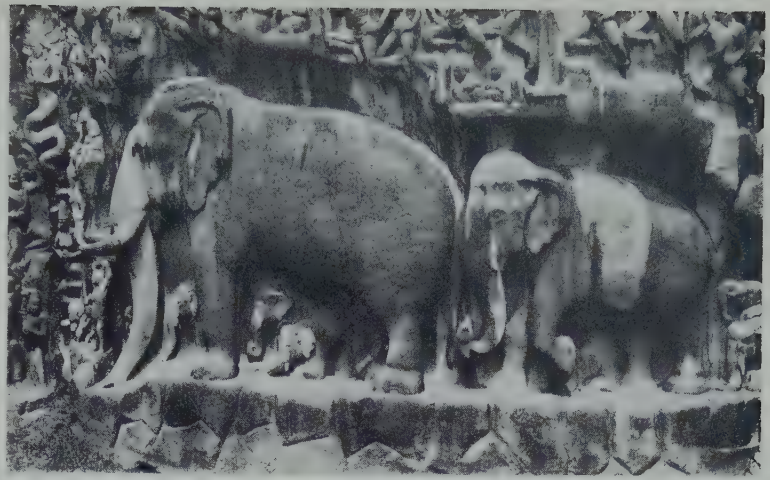
CHAPTER XIII

MAHAVALIPURAM—SHRINE IN SANDS

IT would be redundant to describe all the southern Indian temples on the eastern coast. The railway guide-books will give the traveler all the information he needs about stations, hotels, and rest houses in these historic places. As he goes further south, he will see the vitality of medieval India which has retained here its hold and characteristics. Every city, whether Madjura, Tanjore, or Rameswaram, bears the same imprint, that of its temple, which in each town dominates the life of all.

It should be made clear to the reader that if he goes by the South Indian Railway all the distance from Madras to Kanya Kumari, the Cape Comorin of the British, he will find nothing but temples like immense lighthouses dotting the shore line to the southernmost promontory of India.

Kanya Kumari is the last. It is one of the few temples in India that no meat-eater of any race can enter. Even Hindus of the highest caste, if they have eaten meat, will not be permitted to reach the temple precincts. The Maharajahs, no matter how powerful, if they have crossed to Europe and have eaten European food, can not pollute the temple of Kanya Ku-



Illustrating a canto of the epic the Mahabharata.

mari by entering it. Such Brahmins as the Hindu poet, Sarojini Naidu, are forbidden to enter because they have been to the West. For to the Hindus the West is identified with meat-eating and alcohol-drinking, either of which our custom forbids.

But let us return to Mr. Eagles and myself. Instead of going very far south immediately from Madras to the temples of Madjura and Kanya Kumari, we took boat, train, and jutka, the bullock-cart, to the rock-cut shrines of Mahavalipuram which foreigners pronounce "Mummalapuram." Here a whole section of the Indian epic, the Mahabharata, has been carved in rocks. It is not a cave-temple but a hill cut into a series of shrines on the shore of the sea.

Mr. Eagles said it was like seeing the whole of the Odyssey hewn from hills. "I suppose," he remarked, "that this was necessary for the multitudes who could not read and write. For them the story had to be illustrated, and what better could they do than cut mountains to make illustrations for epics?"

"Don't you think the old Hindus wrought rather well?" I asked him. My friend answered, "The word 'well' is more patronizing than true. You mean they wrought like Titans in order to stimulate the Titanic imagination of the common people." Parenthetically, he criticized, "You said the other day that I was talking like a Hindu, but you are changing too. After one month in India, you are beginning to look less like your people and talk less like them, while I am more like them—Well, I suppose we should not talk about ourselves before these mammoth works of art."

The effect of Mahavalipuram was prodigious as day after day we tramped the sands and examined the rock-cut temples and their Gods whose beauty like a monster crouched by the sea.

Though at least three hundred years younger than Elura, Mahavalipuram, the city in the sands, bore a deep resemblance to it. The emerald sea murmuring its perpetual supplications to the gods here created the same homesickness for eternity in the human soul as did the mountainous silence of Elura.

"What masterful sense of placing and spacing the ancients had!" exclaimed Mr. Eagles again and again.

One evening when the tide came thundering up the beach we were reminded of the sea at Mt. Saint-Michel. It is needless to labor here the obvious resemblance between the Breton and the Hindu shrines of the Middle Ages. Similar religious emotions reared them both. Mahavalipuram is a hill cut and carved into temples, waterfalls, life-size elephants, other beasts, men, and Gods. An entire canto of the Mahabharata has been carved on the rocks in order to teach the pilgrims their Sanskrit epic. The same purpose for which we, moderns, make cinematographs, the ancients chiseled out of dead stones many living truths.

What are the shrines for?

They have been cut out of the solid hill, near the epic scenes, for men to sit within them for the purpose of thinking. As one seated in the posture of meditation gazes over the beach at the dawning of the moon "the many-voiced solitude of the sea" speaks to him, moving the human mind into the most uplifting channels of

From "Ars Asiatica" III, by Coomerswany Havell and Gohoubev, reproduced by courtesy of Les Editions G. Von Oest.

Mahavalipuram (Shore Temple).

thought. "On the edge of the whitening sand, shod in purple, and robed in honey-colored vestments holding the moon, a silver vessel in its hands, the ocean stands invoking God," says an old folk-poet. "O man, stand thou too, shod with courage, in thy robe of consecration, thy immortal soul between thy mortal hands and offer it to Him Who dwells within thee." [1]

[1] Mahavalipuram was finished 700–900 A.D.

CHAPTER XIV

MADURA[1]

FROM Mahavalipuram we were obliged to return to Madras in order to go to Madura. It was evening when we arrived at Madura and after taking our rooms in the station hotel, we set out to explore, without any guide, the famous wall-temple. As we wandered through bazaars where brown men in red and white were buying and selling brass, silver, bronze, and terra cotta plates, we felt transported from the modern city of Madras which is a copy of London, to some medieval town of Giotto and Dante. Soon we slipped out of the bazaars and were treading a dusty road under the starlit dusk. The hush of the night was broken by the muttering of the palm fronds. The softness with which the spirit of the place settled upon us was almost mesmeric.

Abruptly we became conscious of something near us in the dark. After looking carefully we drew nigh to it, and found that we were close to the thick wall of the temple of Madura. It slid like a python through the night as we followed it along. After we had gone about half a mile, suddenly, like the unexpected sight of Mount Everest, the Gopuram, or tower-entrance to the

[1] Madjura too is spelt many ways. The one common way to do it is to spell it Madura. It should be pronounced Madjura.

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Temple Gopuram, entrance tower at Madura.

temple, leaped to the sky before us. It seemed to stun our senses. We felt beset with Gods.

Mr. Eagles exclaimed, "We have seen enough for one evening. I want to hold this impression. I don't want to lose it in talk. Let's go back to our hotel!"

The next morning we went again to inspect the temple, this time with a guide. When we saw it in the daylight, it was no more black and white as in the night, but vibrating in tropical colors which cannot be described. We took a photograph of it, but Mr. Eagles said, "This does not begin to tell the story. How can you picture the rainbow in black and white?"

Within the temple, there were bazaars, a small lake, and many rooms. After passing through an immense corridor we beheld the inner shrine. Wherever we went we felt the same domination of life by religion as in Chartres and Seville. People bought and sold within the ramparts of their temple. All the activities of life centered in this house of God. Pilgrims walked idly through the corridors, and elephants wandered about as carelessly as if they were cats.

Then as we came out and looked again at the walls and the Gopuram in the daylight, the effect was very Gothic, though illuminating. The symbolism of the thick, long temple walls and the four gateways (Gopurams), we grasped. The walls are Time, symbolized by their snake-like shape, running on and on in a maze of gargoyle-like contortions. . . . As if four serpents had devoured one another's tails for the purpose of walking in a certain amount of space with their bodies. And where each mouth had devoured a tail, rose the

tower of an entrance, the Gopuram, like the jeweled head of a python. Twenty-three stories made of Gothic demons cut out of granite and placed like a crown on the head of an infuriated serpent! That is why the entrances seemed grotesque. At the same time instead of repelling they fascinated one.

"Here is a strange symbolism," said Mr. Eagles, "What does it mean?"

The Brahmin guide, Mr. Namudri, exclaimed, "Time—Change—the snake is an adequate symbol of this because a snake goes into a hole in the winter and comes out with a new skin in the spring, forever changing its appearance and never dying—such is Time.

"Thus the gateways and the walls of this religion-ridden city presented Time and Change. Truth, in the coils of the serpent, is the heart of Life or the Soul. This is the inner shrine, the deity supreme and untrammeled by mutability. Millions come in pilgrimages to this place in order to visualize to themselves Life in the coils of Change. Having seen the symbolism here they go home purified."

Long afterwards, when we had seen all the southern temples and their beauty, Mr. Eagles said to me one day, "He who does not understand symbolism will never understand India. India is not a fact, but a state of consciousness."

But wherever we went it was hard to have access to the holy of holies. Because Mr. Eagles and I frankly admitted we were neither vegetarians nor rigid teetotalers, we were never permitted within the inmost sanctuary of any temple. Neither in Tanjore, nor in

Trichinopoly, whose beautiful outer temples we saw could we gain entrance to their hearts.

But seen from without all the Southern Indian shrines save Rameswaram give one the feeling of their kinship with the Gothic architecture of Europe. Yet no proof exists that the two are related. Parts of the temple at Trichinopoly and the interior of Madura resemble the Cathedral of Burgos to such an extent that while observing them both Mr. Eagles and myself reiterated, "Why, we feel as if we are in Burgos." Fantastic though it may sound, Victor Hugo was not far wrong when he said airily that the Gothic Cathedrals came from India. What he really meant was that when religious mysticism truly dominated Europe during and after the Crusaders had been to the Orient, houses of God that were erected were of the same nature as in Southern India where even to this day Mysticism holds complete sway over the thoughts and the spirit of the race.

CHAPTER XV

SAND OF SEVEN HUES

I HAVE already spoken of our being barred from the sanctum and sanctorum of the South Indian temples, save the one at Rameswaram.

But before going to that celebrated work of art, we went to Travancore, and Cochin, two ancient Hindu kingdoms situated on the Malabar coast. There we found the women much freer than elsewhere in Southern India. They were freer than women in America where the social order has not yet grown matriarchal. In Travancore, Cochin and the rest of Malabar the Hindu social order is matriarchal in every sense of the word. No one who has seen the south of India can say that Hindus believe in seclusion of women, child-betrothal, and illiteracy. All the Malabar Hindu states have maintained high standards of literacy, advanced age of betrothal and marriage, and real freedom for women. This particular state of affairs touches millions of Kerala Hindu men, women, and children.

"How advanced they are!" exclaimed Mr. Eagles. "The Hindus of Malabar will teach foreign tourists not to plunge into facile generalization about Hinduism. Here you have three features of Hindu society that contradict our previous notions about Hinduism."

"Apart from its social order the Malabar coast should interest Europeans and Americans, for it was here that the Portuguese navigator, Vasco da Gama landed after rounding the Cape of Good Hope. The port of Calicut is still there. Most generously the Hindu Maharajah received that intrepid Portuguese who found the sea route to India whose fabulous wealth Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Milton praised."

It may amaze the reader to know that the Indian Christians of Malabar were not converted to Christianity after the arrival of Vasco da Gama. They do not owe their religion to any modern European race. They were converted nearly nineteen hundred years ago by St. Thomas, the apostle, who was called the Doubter. When Thomas came, our people received him with the same hospitality as they extended to Da Gama centuries later. In India there are Christian monks who have maintained their relation to their Saviour through unbroken apostolic succession of two thousand years.

Not only Christians, but Jews too, we have whose temple in India is probably the oldest in the whole world. About eighteen hundred years ago some Hebrew navigators were shipwrecked on the coast of Malabar. India welcomed them. They were so pleased with our people that they decided to make our country their home. In a short time they were urged to erect their synagogue. Their descendants are still to be seen in southern India worshiping God in their own temple.

When Mr. Eagles saw the ancient Christian church and the Jewish tabernacle, he was impelled to worship

in both of them. With him I too worshiped an hour in each place.

"India is full of tolerance of other faiths," he remarked later.

"More than that, sir," I proclaimed. "India has more than tolerance. She practices active reverence for other faiths. You shall see my country truly symbolized by the sands of Kanya Kumari where we are going now."

"What do you mean?" He was eager to learn my meaning.

"Tomorrow you shall see the colors of the sand. . . . Then you will know."

* * * * * *

That night we set out for Kanya Kumari, Cape Camorin, the southernmost point of India.

The next day just at sunrise our train pulled into the station. After breakfast we marched towards the seashore where legend has it Kanya Kumari, the divine virgin, Parvati, was given in marriage to the God of death and immortality, Shiva. Soon we reached the cocoanut grove that stood on the edge of the beach. Passing through its cool shadows we felt refreshed.

Then just as we emerged from under the cool gloom of the grove, the iridescent sands thrust their beauty like arrows into our eyes, while beyond them the sea spread her mantle of green fire.

"Just the place for the marriage of two great gods!" exclaimed Mr. Eagles. "But how did the sand come to have such colors?"

"It is in the ancient epics of India," I began to give

information. "It is said that on this spot King Himalaya gave his daughter, Parvati, in marriage to God Shiva. And as the wedded pair went on their honeymoon, the gods of the upper air as well as the Goddess Earth, flung rice at them.

"How do we know that the rice was scattered?

"A single glance at the sand would convince anyone. Even to this day the sands of Kanya Kumari are of the seven colors: red, brown, yellow, silver, orange, smoke-blue, and purple. They symbolize the seven kinds of rice with which the gods pelted Shiva and Parvati after the wedding.

"In order to mark the spot, after the marriage of the Father and the Mother of the universe, Varuna, the sea-god, decreed: Let the tides of all my waters leave sands of seven colors here, so that men will know where their Cosmic Parents were wedded.

"So, dear Mr. Eagles, from that time on the southernmost point of India is called Kanya Kumari and its sands wear the pattern of red, brown, yellow, orange, silver, purple, and smoke-blue colors.[1] By the way, you remember my hinting at these sands when we were looking at the old temples of the Jewish and Christian sects of India. What I meant was that like the seven colors of the one seashore the seven ancient religions of mankind will be harmonized in India. We Hindus practice active reverence for all the religions because we believe through us they will attain their final unity."

[1] For a complete account of Shiva's marriage see "Caste and Outcast."

CHAPTER XVI

RAMESWARAM FAMOUS FOR ITS COLONNADE

THOUGH we were allowed to see the spot where the gods were married, we were forbidden to enter the temple where Kanya Kumari is worshiped. No matter how I expostulated with the Brahmins, I could not make them relax their taboo. They were unanimous in one thing: namely, that any person who has eaten beef and drunk alcohol can not enter the sacred shrine. In spite of the taboo the place was crowded with pilgrims, which meant that it is literally true that there are millions of persons in India who have never tasted meat and alcohol.

* * * * * *

That very day we boarded a train going from Kanya Kumari to Rameswaram. I left with a sense of annoyance in my mind. I grumbled, "A Sanskritist like you is more of a Brahmin, dear friend, than these boneheads of the temple. Yet they will not let you enter."

"It would be wiser to forget Kanya Kumari whose temple is not of great aesthetic significance," Mr. Eagles consoled me as our train drew nearer Rameswaram to the north.

While we discussed different shrines, a Brahmin

Photo courtesy—

The most sumptuous example of classical art is this corridor of Rameswaram

named Ramayer who was in our compartment and with whom we had spoken said to us, "I can facilitate your visiting the temple of Rameswaram."

We exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes," returned the stranger, "I am a trustee of the temple of Rameswaram."

Mr. Eagles and I examined him closely. He wore Indian Khaddar (homespun) like all true nationalists and a vast turban with an immense carbuncle in the center of it covered his head. He was as fair as a Kashmirian Rajput. His profile gave one the impression that he was a Jew and his eyes resembled more the long decorative eyes of a southern God than those of a man.

After I had explained to him Mr. Eagles' nationality, Ramayer said, "Ha, America. I have seen many pictures of it. Houses there are very tall and many people commit suicide by jumping from their roofs."

"Where do you hear such things?" asked Mr. Eagles in amazement.

"Cinemas always display them," explained Ramayer sweetly. "In America shooting one another is also a common practice."

"To think that our own films are such fine propaganda for us!" complained my friend ironically.

"Have I offended the gentlemen?" asked the Brahmin anxiously.

"Offense? No, sir," continued Mr. Eagles. "I am ashamed that for a handful of dollars we are selling vile pictures to you and are succeeding, too, in giving you an unworthy picture of our life."

"Besides," Ramayer advanced his views, "there is

that Oolloo (monkey) Chaplin. Sir, he is amusing. Sometimes I feel exhausted after laughing at his films. He is worth a dozen apes in the zoo. I like his pictures."

"Which one do you prefer?" I asked with the enthusiasm of a 'fan.' "

Ramayer remarked with great gusto, "All. The animal must have been born with laughter in his bowels. Fantasy is the blood that runs through his veins."

Here the train drew into Rameswaram, interrupting the illuminating appreciation of Charlie Chaplin.

CHAPTER XVII

A SOUTH INDIAN NIGHT

IN Rameswaram we were put up in the house of Mr. Niskam, a Tamil Barrister who was a friend of Ramayer.

Mr. Niskam had graduated from Harvard before taking his law studies in London. On his return to India in 1912, he set up in the practice of law at the Madras High Court. By 1927 he had amassed quite a fortune.

His was a typical South Indian home. A fountain murmured in the central court covered with mimosa and other tropical plants. One was aware of it only by its low, gentle murmur and by seeing a few drops of water now and then. The tiled terra cotta floor, the granite walls of the house, all had been built according to the canons of the old domestic architecture of the South. There were many rooms, and many corridors. Tall windows from floor to ceiling let in floods of sunlight in winter and abundant cool breezes from the sea in summer.

Though it was December the days were hot in Rameswaram. The warmth of our first evening there drove us to the roof along with our dapper host and the ladies of the house. There in the moonlight we witnessed something that for us will remain symbolic of

enchantment to our dying day. Mr. Niskam's two sisters, about fourteen and sixteen, and his wife, nearly twenty-six, and his old mother played on the Setar and recited the Ramayana to us in Sanskrit.

Can the reader picture to himself a group of people listening to a recital of Homer in the original? This was its equivalent. Valmiki's "Ramayana" not only resembles Homer's "Iliad" in plot but surpasses it in moral and spiritual beauty. That is why thousands of Hindus still preserve it in their memory and recite favorite passages in hours of joy, as well as of grief.

In southern India every cultivated woman learns from her mother the art of reciting from the Sanskrit poems and scriptures, not because they are ornamental but because they may help her to live and conduct her life wisely. For "sorrow is the source of song, and singing relieves sadness," says the old proverb.

Why is Sanskrit so widely appreciated in southern India? The South was never completely conquered by any foreigner until the British came a century ago. The continuity of our ancient culture has never been seriously interrupted there. That is why Mr. Eagles and I heard "Valmiki Kokila—the nightingale Valmiki's song of Rama" not as an exotic, but as a familiar thing. The mother of the house beat time softly with two small brass cymbals, the daughter-in-law thrummed the stringed instrument, while the two sisters chanted. Every syllable was given its proper weight, every intonation its exact force. And whenever the girls paused for a few moments to rest, the other two ladies took their places without giving up their instruments.

I looked at Mr. Eagles. His eyes were shut, his mouth was tightly closed, and by the lines on his forehead I could infer his concentration, so intense that he could follow the "tiger-tones" of Valmiki.

The palm fronds above our heads uttered soft sounds as the sea breeze shook them. Wisps of clouds like ermine clung to the moon. Far off the bazaar of Rameswaram boomed with noise and beyond it the Indian Ocean throbbed against the East. In this exact place where thousands of years ago the Sanskrit poet sang, we were hearing the same lines—"Iti bruvanam sandesham Sumantra! Bruhitatha punariti raja bhachanam avrabit: The King pleaded again and again, 'Repeat, O friend, Sumantra, that last bit, repeat, O golden tidings, repeat!' "

As if they had heard our thoughts, the ladies began, "O sister, I went by a tree where a bird was singing. I looked, I listened. O enchantment—did I hear a bird? No. It was the soul of Vimiki singing, Kudanti Valmiki Kokila."

If shedding tears over the poems of India's Homer be effeminacy, then Edgar Eagles was the most effeminate member of our party that night. In the recitation where the King's heart broke because he was losing his son, Rama, my friend's heart broke because the poetry of his youth leaped out of him after many years. We who had been born to India's culture were not as deeply moved as he. Sanskrit broke his Anglo-Saxon reserve and laid bare before us the soul of a man.

CHAPTER XVIII

A DAY IN RAMESWARAM

THE town of Rameswaram is situated on one of the southernmost promontories of India. Legend has it that the mythical hero, Rama, after rescuing his wife, Sita, crossed from Ceylon in an aerial chariot, Pushpaka Ratha, and landed in Rameswaram, their first stop in India. The place was declared sacred immediately. Since then people go on pilgrimages to the Rama Temple in the hope of losing their sins.

After Valmiki, our sole national poet Kalidasa, celebrated the glory of Rameswaram in more than one poem. His most poignant passages appear in the book "Cloud-Messenger" which is available in the English translation of Professor Arthur Ryder.

Mr. Eagles who knew some lines of the "Cloud-Messenger" by heart wanted to see Rameswaram as Kalidasa saw it twenty-two hundred years ago.

Before sunrise wandering at least forty minutes through bazaars and lanes, gardens and houses, we reached the beach. Since we had not known how to reach it directly, the sudden vision of the sea startled us. Like a blue black beast, it charged and fell against the reddening sands. The horizon looked to Mr. Eagles exactly as Kalidasa had described it centuries ago:

Dhara nibaddheva Kalanka rekha—that black circle of nothingness that holds back the sea.

As is invariably the case in the tropics, night turned swiftly into day and the sun with a thousand hammers of red beat the ocean into multicolored myriad iridescences. Now as if the curtain had risen the play began—thousands of pilgrims in blue, white, yellow, and orange walked towards the green waters for their ablutions. They were chanting as they trod the amber sands: "Pahi pahi Jaganatha Kripaya vaktabatsala—protect us, save us, O Lord of the Universe, through Thy infinite compassion."

Among the pilgrims we noticed the four ladies of Mr. Niskam's household. They had already taken their baths, and were on their way to the temple of Rama. We followed them. Either mud huts, or stone mansions, whatever we happened to pass was full of life. Parrots screeched from treetops, joining their voices with sellers of fruits and flowers in the dusty streets.

Our four ladies bought "Sindoor" lac from a vendor and marked their foreheads with it.

"What is that symbolic of, can you tell me?" asked Mr. Eagles.

"Women make red marks on their forehead, men put on white," I answered, "because we believe that man has an inner eye—the third eye, 'tritya netra,' with which he sees the God that is within him. A person puts that mark on his brow to remind himself that 'Nahi mam sakyase drastum ananaiva sachakshusa—no soul can find God by the (half) blindness of his two outer

eyes but by opening his inner eye.' This is a daily ceremony."

By now we had drawn to the Gopuram (gate) about twenty stories high, sculptured more beautifully than the Gopurams of Madura. The pilgrims thronged here, colors and shapes clashed and clamored in a torrential medley. Out of this stir of life, our friend Ramayer, whom we had met on the train from Kanya Kumari, appeared on the scene marvelously robed in flaming saffron, wearing a gold-braided headgear.

"Follow me," he commanded us.

After going through the Gopuram, the pilgrims dispersed into a vast courtyard near which the vendors were selling relics, charms and miracles. Naked elephants and bulls jostled the pilgrims, but nobody minded men or beasts. Even here parrots were screeching from ceilings and cornices. Out of the deafening din, we were led into a corner by Ramayer. As he turned into it, he said, "Now look!"

We did. Behold, the famous colonnade of Rameswaram waited to receive us. Colors, carvings, images, pillars and delicately painted ceilings spread their witchery before our eyes.

Here was classic art at its finest. How severe is the Brahmanic taste, despite its sense of luxury, may be gathered from the art of Rameswaram. Sculpture, painting, architecture, and music were bound together by a high conception of discipline.

As we gazed at the marvel we heard pipes played to the right announcing the procession of Devadasis, temple dancers. In robes of ultramarine, and drawing

scarlet and violet veils they danced towards their deity. Every gesture of the Ajanta frescoes came suddenly to life. The dancers turned, twisted, and spun with sharp, angular movements to the measure of invisible music. Words can not describe what we were allowed to witness.[1]

At last we had seen the real thing—the symbolic dance of the East at a Brahmin shrine. If the God was not placated by such art, he was no God indeed.

[1] Hindu social reformers have abolished the institution of Devadasis this year. Mr. Eagles saw their last dance. The temples of Madura and Rameswaram were built in the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER XIX

THE TEMPLE OF JUGGERNAUT

HAVING finished with most of southern India, we turned northward. On our path lay Juggernaut, which we visited for a few days before we reached Calcutta.

In the neighborhood of Puri-on-the-Sea, where the temple of Juggernaut is situated, there are some beautiful ancient monuments. The temples of Bhubenaswar and Konarka are very famous. There is nothing more remarkable in the city of Juggernaut than these two places. Once all of these ruins were a part of the cult of Juggernaut.[1] The worship of the Juggernaut is mystical and symbolic. Thousands of pilgrims came and went while we were there, but we saw no evidence of prevalence of disease with which the festivals of Juggernaut have been associated by unkind foreign journalists.

It is the only place in India where there has been no caste system from time immemorial. The caste system (now disappearing from most of India) was never allowed to desecrate this city of the Lord of the universe. [2]

One day while we were there Mr. Eagles went into

[1] For a description of the origin of Juggernaut rituals I refer the reader to "Ghond the Hunter," published by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.
[2] See "Caste and Outcaste."

the ocean for a short swim and afterwards sat down to eat among the various classes of people near the temple. He then came back to the hotel, and had this extraordinary experience, which I repeat in his own words.

"When I lay down on my bed for the afternoon siesta," he said, "I thought the sea had risen and washed out the whole town except one child whom I saw being carried away by the waves. I waded out to rescue it and found myself standing on the beach holding my hands in the gesture of protecting the baby. Now, how do you explain that?"

I could not explain it, but I said, "You are not the only Westerner who has known illusion in this country," and I referred him to the book of Sir Walter Lawrence who had more than one strange experience when he lived in India.

That evening we went to visit a holy man who had the power of imparting fragrance to anything he touched. He took Mr. Eagles' handkerchief, rolled it in his fingers and gave it back. Later, my friend took it out—it held the odor of lotus.

"I have seen this done before to other people's handkerchiefs," I exclaimed, "but I have never known how."

"In India you don't explain, you just accept," rejoined Mr. Eagles.

The holy man, who to my mind was not of the best type, but who was very beautiful and looked like Rabindranath Tagore, the bearded poet, replied in a gentle voice to my friend's question about his dream,

"In India we create illusions, personal experiences, and race experiences."

"What do you mean, my Lord?" I asked.

"I may illustrate my meaning in this way," he said. "India until ten years ago was ruled by one hundred thousand English who before 1908 could rule without shooting, imprisoning, and massacring people, but now shootings and the legalized lawlessness of the government are the routine of the day. How does this happen? The illusion that they could rule us is gone. We are creating in India the new idea they cannot rule us, and as we withdraw the old one and put forth the new, a conflict is created between the British and ourselves."

"But who could deliberately sit down and manufacture these ideas?" asked Mr. Eagles.

"If possible—" the holy man weighed every word before he said it, "the Indian spirit, which acts to satisfy its own interests. Once it gave the English the illusion that they could rule India, for that suited its interest. Now it is precipitating the other illusion that they cannot rule India, and I can already see the color, the form, and the stature of the new life and mold into which India is being cast."

"Just what do you mean by illusion?" asked Mr. Eagles.

"Do you understand the meaning of our word Maya?" asked the Holy Man in reply. Not waiting for my friend's assent he went on: "You, an American, have experienced an illusion today, which shows that the dimensions of your mind are changing. You are

taking on our dimensions, and as long as you live in India they will be very helpful to you."

After this baffling explanation we left the holy man and walked into the balmy night on whose far shore we heard the sea, softly whimpering at the stars.

But his recent experience of illusion had affected Mr. Eagles profoundly. During the rest of his visit through India he was more absorbed by such adventures and ideas than it has ever been in my experience to witness in any foreigner, and this became increasingly clear to me as we proceeded on our travels.

CHAPTER XX

CALCUTTA AND THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

FROM Juggernaut we went to Calcutta, my detestable home town. The thronging factories, dirty streets, evil smelling and overcrowded—all were there. On the morning of our arrival the sun rose on a violet horizon revealing the tawny Hugli river covered with boats piled high with oranges, bananas, and rice. Against them stood the Anglo-Indian houses, perpendicular and plain, copying the smug little homes of the British middle classes in Brixton and Upper Tooting. Recently an extra dose of architectural banality has been added to Calcutta. It is the Victoria memorial: a gigantic combination of St. Paul's Cathedral and the Palais Royale wrecked on the shores of the tropics.

Calcutta always has the air of a metropolis, and more so to the eyes of Mr. Eagles who saw it during Christmas, 1928, when it was not the old, ugly city that I have known from childhood, for at the time of his visit the Indian National Congress was meeting there to decide upon an ultimatum to the British Government. This congress represented the largest collection of Indian leaders in Indian history. There were Gandhi, Nehru, the Ali brothers, and many other important

Indians not yet known to the outside world. Mr. Eagles preferred to attend these meetings by himself and seek his own adventures, and I think it would be well to see this tremendous gathering through his eyes. He has allowed me to take the following account from a letter to his brother in America:

Today I went to the All Parties Conference where complete Dominion status for India like that of Canada by the year 1930 was voted on.

But before I tell about it, I must describe to you what I saw yesterday. The president of the All Indian National Congress, Motilal Nehru, an old man past sixty-five, arrived in Calcutta, and 500,000 people lined the streets of the city to receive him. The river was filled with boats; the bridge was covered with green and yellow caps, turbans, and dresses. Houses were draped with bunting of all colors. From the railway station came a mass of youths clad in red and green marching in military formation. Behind them seventeen pairs of milk-white horses bestridden by ruby-turbaned, emerald-coated postilions drawing a chariot in which was seated old Nehru in common white homespun. I never heard so much noise nor saw so many colors in my life.

Immediately behind these appeared the British commission of Sir John Simons who had come to investigate India's fitness for home rule, and they were received with cold stares and absolute silence by the crowds as if they had suddenly changed from a volcano into an iceberg! These differences in sentiment naturally sharpened my curiosity. I wanted to see more, so today I went, as I said, to the All Parties Conference where the constitution made by Nehru was voted upon. The Independents were led by Iyenga of Madras. He harangued them on complete separation from the British Empire. I thought he had got the whole assembly on his side. Everybody was as excited as a bull at a red flag. I expected that they were al going out in a few minutes to blow up the British Empire. When the tumult was

at its most deafening stage, a very short man, bare to the waist, face ugly as sin, but with extraordinary eyes, stood up. There was no mistake in my mind as to who it was. If a man sees Gandhi and can't recognize him, it is his own fault. The tranquillity of him quieted the entire assembly. He made a cold and short speech. The leader of the Independents made two words grow where one had grown before, as M. says, but this fellow made brooks of thought flow in a desert. There was force in his calmness, there was energy almost invincible in his serenity, and I think that what he said was true: it is up to the British to keep India within the British Empire. He was harmless as a dove, but wily as a serpent, for he placed the burden of good will on the English side. If the British fail to translate this good will into action, then the Hindus will resort to other means. Now don't you think that was clever? There's a saint for you! Henry VIII couldn't be as foxy as that. And I believe that Gandhi has given the British in the next twelve months a chance to do a generous thing.

Gandhi is hard to describe. He is so simple that you can't hit upon an analogy, comparison, or anything else that will give an impression of what he looks like and the kind of feelings he arouses in you. I am going to have a few more talks with him before the show is over and then perhaps I will be able to tell you better what I think of him.

CHAPTER XXI

MR. EAGLES MEETS MY BROTHER

FROM the moment we first set foot in Calcutta, Mr. Eagles urged me to introduce him to my sister and "that brother of 'My Brother's Face.' "

Introducing him to my sister was easily brought about. But arranging a meeting with my brother proved nearly impossible. For he had been imprisoned, then exiled to another province by the C. I. D., the British Indian Secret Police.

I told Mr. Eagles the history of my brother's sad life since 1923.

"Jadu Gopal is a hot patriot. As you know he had signed a truce with the British Government, but early in September of 1923 he was suddenly taken into police custody and imprisoned without trial until 1927. He was never openly accused and he never knew why he became again an object of suspicion to the authorities, in spite of his continued assertion that he had never broken faith. However, he was not alone in misfortune.

"In 1923 many others were kept in confinement by the Secret Police, but his case was hard for the imprisonment prevented his practising his profession, medicine, except among the other prisoners.

"He was a surgeon trained in Western medicine, in one of the numerous Indian Institutes of Surgery. Because of his talent as a doctor he had made a decent living for our whole family. During his incarceration of four years not only he, but those who depended on him for their daily bread, suffered unspeakably. When a man is put behind prison bars, other people related to him are likely to be trapped in the cage of penury. Besides my brother's practice is all gone. When he returns to Calcutta, the Police permitting, he will have to start all over again in his profession.

"In 1927 the authorities released him as suddenly and mysteriously as they had deprived him of liberty. Even so they will not permit him to return to his home and family until the autumn of 1929."

"Why didn't you tell me this earlier?" asked Mr. Eagles.

"You did not tell me before that you were so eager to meet him and you know how I abhor airing any kind of wrong."

"You are keeping something from me," hazarded my friend with the firmness of a professional mind-reader.

"To be frank, I do not like you to meet Jadu, for this reason. I am not sure that you will find him at present a man without bitterness toward the British Empire. I don't think you want to meet an unhappy man."

"How do you know that he is embittered?" he retorted.

To this I answered with my own surmise. "His unwarranted arrest, and complete incarceration for four

years, must have made him bitter against England. Also I do not and never have capitalized England's unjust treatment of my people. Since I am not sure that my brother has retained his sweetness of disposition, I see no good to come as a result of your meeting him. These are my real reasons. But, in any case he is out of reach. Since he is exiled to Ranchi Behar."

"But the impossible is no discouragement to us Americans, I must meet him," insisted my friend. "It does not matter where he is, I cannot return to America without seeing him. He is too well known a character to miss. I must make an effort. Is there no way of bringing him to Calcutta? Can't we do something about it?"

The instant Mr. Eagles implied that something might be done to bring about my brother's temporary return to Calcutta, I grew enthusiastic. I wanted to act on a dozen plans at once. Seeing me suddenly so eager, Mr. Eagles laughed sarcastically. "You are Americanized beyond redemption. The moment you are asked to do anything you whir merrily like a wound-up Ford. To think what America can do to a soul in a few years!"

Nothing daunted, I not only set to work at once, but produced results, which were brought about by following the American magic precept: "Don't write, wire." I telegraphed, "Dr. Jadu Mukerji, Ranchi (Province), Behar. All India Medical Conference meeting in Calcutta during holidays, you ought attend stop Telegraph authorities for permission to be present for a few days. Don't write them, wire."

My ingenuity thrilled Mr. Eagles. He sat down him-

self to write a few telegrams to various high officials to whom he was well known through his introductions from America.

"We will make the wires hot," he added, his voice sounding as though he were mesmerized in his concentration as he wrote his numerous messages.

In two days' time my brother telegraphed "Permission received starting at once."

After the receipt of that message I again implored Mr. Eagles not to expect to find "that famous brother" a happy, forgetful, sweet, and carefree soul, but a bitter pessimist.

My friend said, "Never mind that, I want to make sure now that he has really received the permit. I will go to the Calcutta Police myself and find out."

He thereupon went to the Lalbazar, Red Market, Police station where he was informed "that Dr. Jadu Mukerji had been given permission to attend the forthcoming Medical Congress at Calcutta."

While my brother was on his way I was filled with all kinds of strange fancies regarding his political outlook. Six years ago he had been willing to accept the status of Canada for India—a dominion within the British Empire. But would he accept it now? Would he be gentle and sweet as of old or would he complain bitterly of his treatment by the British?

But when at last he arrived home, my sister, Mr. Eagles, and I all were agreeably surprised to find him calm and carefree. He had grown thinner. But the sound of his voice and the look about his eyes put an end to all my silly apprehensions. Of course there was a

change in his appearance. Horizontal creases cut their way through the smooth brow. Grim determination had taken possession of the corners of his mouth. And last of all, his eyes seemed to possess an unearthly light.

* * * * * *

Since I have given a description of my home elsewhere, I shall not trouble the reader with it now.

Mr. Eagles and my brother became friends from their first meeting. It seemed as though the years that they had not known one another had never existed. Through the entire week of his stay they were nearly inseparable.

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CHAPTER XXII

DOCTORS AND DISEASES

DURING the session of the National Congress there were many exhibitions in Calcutta. For instance, there was a "mothers-and-babies" exhibition, called the Maternity Exhibit, full of interest to the women of the city. Dr. Dahs, an old Hindu physician, was in charge of the different sections and there were lecture rooms in which doctors explained to young and old women the advances science has made toward preserving women in child-bed and new born children. In another place there were stereopticon slides illustrating infant hygiene; in still another women doctors and nurses were giving illustrated lectures on personal hygiene.

All these things interested Mr. Eagles, and no doubt they filled him with optimism for India's future. From there we went to the Dentistry Ward where doctors trained in American universities held forth on the need and the nature of dentistry. Mr. Eagles said that in this ward the doctors bore the imprint of their American training. They were more prompt, more alert, and less ceremonious than elsewhere.

He said to Dr. Ahmed, the head of the organization, "If a man spends six of his formative years in a for-

eign country, he is bound to bear the imprint of it for the rest of his life. Your Americanisms tickle me to death!"

"You do not know how it pleases me to hear that," replied Dr. Ahmed. "If I could tear myself away from my profession for a few months, I would like to pay a visit to the Middle West. I cannot tell you how often I feel homesick for Chicago."

Another, Dr. Majumdar, longed for a sight of Harvard University. The burden of his complaint was that the pressure of his work did not permit him to take leave and go to Boston to find out what they were doing at the Forsythe Clinic.

"Boston is the most dignified city in the New World!" he exclaimed.

It was hard work to edge him away from the subject of America, but the most amusing incident of the afternoon took place when we were visiting the Malaria Exhibit where Bidhan Roy, the greatest doctor in India, was lecturing on the prevention of malaria. Again and again, the eminent man insisted that in the province of Bengal malaria was unknown before the province had been industrialized. He blamed the conscienceless industrialism for the enormous mortality there, and he told the same old story that we had been hearing throughout India, that the railroads had torn up the ancient irrigation system, which the innovators had never replaced to drain the stagnant swamps and keep them free from the growth of malaria-bearing mosquitoes. To force his point further he quoted such eminent doctors as Bentley, the man in charge of

malaria in Bengal, and Sir William Wilcox, the engineer.

Dr. Roy concluded by saying that chronic malaria had undermined the province of 70,000,000 people to such an extent that they had no resistance to any disease.

"There is no such thing as a normal person in this province," he said. "The majority of us are potential invalids from malaria. Infant deaths and deaths of mothers would decrease as fast as malaria is controlled."

Next we visited the lectures and exhibitions on plague and cholera. It was simply appalling to learn how these diseases had taken their toll many years. The bubonic plague came to India in the nineties. Nothing solid has been done to prevent its continued havoc among the people. Similarly syphilis. . . .

After hearing such grievances, Mr. Eagles decided to go and talk to Gandhi about everything concerning India. While he went off to see the Mahatma, my brother and I turned to seeing our home more intimately. The same religious atmosphere prevailed there that I have recorded in "Caste and Outcast." Neighbors came to see me and asked many questions about America. The majority of them had seen American films and wondered if in America women were continually divorcing their husbands and husbands shooting one another. When I told them that these things are seen only in the movies and not in real life, they were amazed. They could not believe that I was telling the truth. I recounted some extraordinary stories of the in-

tegrity and moral beauty of America. The burden of my speech was this: Every nation dwells in two places —in the market place and in the home. You should not judge a nation by its market place. Foreigners are likely to see the market place of every country they visit, and sometimes they make the mistake of picturing the home life of that country in terms of the bazaar. They should bear in mind that the home is run on different principles. Buying and selling has its rules, but love of father and son, mother and daughter, husband and wife, has its rule too. It is a grave mistake to judge the home life of a nation in other terms than its own inner spirit.

This speech had an effect. The people began to say, "Perhaps all Americans have not so many bad things in their minds as some Americans have?"

"No," I said. "There are Americans and Americans. There are Hindus and Hindus. Never confuse the sheep with the goats anywhere!"

I promised them that as my exhibit I would bring to them Mr. Eagles who was a representative American. Some of the people had already seen him come and go. In order to give them an inkling of his life I told them that he supported four philanthropic institutions in America, and that though he was rich, most of his money was devoted to the good of others. They were very curious indeed to see such an American more closely.

On that occasion I said to the people that I should like to conduct a reading in our temple one of these evenings. Now, as everyone knows, in times gone by,

a Hindu who had gone across the ocean, eaten meat, and drunk alcohol, would have been considered outcast; so when I proposed to conduct a service in the temple, I could perceive a certain dismay among the people. But I was determined to overcome all obstacles in my path. Since my sister was eager to see me succeed we proclaimed the exact date on which my reading the scriptures should take place.

EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER TO MRS. EAGLES

CHAPTER XXIII

MR. EAGLES WRITES OF MY BROTHER

I HAVE had long talks with the brother of "My Brother's Face." He is as different from the one we know in America as India is different from Detroit. Jadu is all sweetness and apathy. He is sweet towards everyone he meets but full of apathy towards himself. A genuine pagan of the stoic school. Nothing Christian about him. He has no notion of the redemption of Man by suffering. Though he has suffered much yet he finds no meaning in it.

"As for the British," he said, "they desire to protect their Indian Empire. We, like the Ganges in flood, seek to wash the Empire clean. Until our blood is spilt in rivers nothing can shake the foundation of British rule."

"About the justice of the thing," he remarked, "is our cause just? We think so. Of eternal justice I can say nothing. Only a God can see and appraise that delicate matter. Without using force we should fight for what we consider righteous. We can and must see that we give a good account of ourselves. Like men we should

act, and like men we should die fighting. A healthy soul should fight without resentment. . . . At the present moment our relation with England has definitely entered the phase of real warfare. We, the nationalists, should stand behind Gandhi and make a holocaust of ourselves. Even if we are beaten it will cleanse India of cowardice."

About his prison experience he said, "I was a prisoner of war. I was unafraid because I had nothing on my conscience. Ever since the amnesty of 1921 I had scrupulously kept out of political conspiracy. Not only myself but scores of other young men who were imprisoned with me were innocent. That is why we were never tried. But prisoners of war should not expect to be tried, as some civilians in war-time are kept in captivity for strategic reasons so were we kept."

"You have no bitterness against Britain then?" I asked with trepidation.

"Soldiers in the trenches are not bitter. They are too occupied for such emotion. I am too busy.

"Jail has done me this harm. It has hurt my capacity to remember. My memory has been severely impaired. In jail nothing eventful happens. So owing to the lack of fodder the animal, memory, almost dies. In medical work I can not trust a single thing to my once prodigious memory. Formerly if I saw a man and heard his name I never forgot it or him. Now I am absent-minded to such an extent that I call you half the time Mr. Bird. By calling you Bird I can slowly evoke Eagle in my mind."

Once I asked him, "Tell me the truth. Has ill health

augmented considerably during British rule as Doctor Roy asserted at the meeting?"

As a doctor and a scientist he replied, "I can prove to you that the health of our province has deteriorated during the past seventy years much more than in the seventy years preceding them. Due to rapid and careless industrialization the western half of our province is nearly ruined. Both the British and ourselves should be blamed for it. As an example take the suburbs of Calcutta which we can examine at this moment. They are hot-beds of malaria. No reason for it save this: the entire place has been industrialized too quickly.

"Though the city proper is nearly altogether free of malaria, the suburbs, whether Kashipore to the north, Alipore to the southeast, and Belur to the west across the river, are malaria-bound. Yet eighty years ago there was no malaria there. At that time the city of Calcutta had not been industrialized. Modern Calcutta has built its own sewer system at the expense of the adjacent places. It has encroached on and upset the drainage of the countryside. The other parts of western Bengal eighty years ago had no malaria. Now the expansion of industrialism at the expense of their old drainage system is causing stagnation of water which has made malarial fever a permanent condition.

"It is the same situation in regard to tuberculosis. Swift and careless industrialization has fostered the spread of that disease. More women die of it than men. And more city people die of it than peasants. Among women the baneful effect of Purdah is potent. The death rate among females was 39.4 per 1,000 as com-

pared with 24.3 among males. In Ward 24 it reached the terrible figure of 48.2 per 1,000. In no fewer than six wards it was over 40 per 1,000. These figures constitute a terrible indictment of the purdah system. Surely the women of India have a claim to demand the abolition of the customs which mean premature death to so many of them. Dr. Lankester states in his report that 'Both from towns and village districts in the neighborhood of Calcutta . . . I obtained ample evidence of the spread of consumption from the central city to parts around within a large area.'

" 'The factors opposing reduction are: (1) Steady increase of town life. (2) Increasing replacement of outdoor by in-door occupations. (3) The reduction of house room which goes with town life. . . .'

"Malaria in all West Bengal involves over twenty million people. You see the other half of our province, East Bengal, is not yet industrialized. The old system of irrigation with the old agriculture—save where jute growing has come in—holds its sway. There people are healthy, more spirited, and have a greater longevity.

"In the greater part of West Bengal, malaria is in our blood. Given that as a permanent condition sickness becomes a normal state instead of health. Let me tell you an experience of my own. After I had been in prison over a year I was allowed to operate on the eyes of some of the men there who were going blind. Before and after restoring the sight of some of them I carefully examined the state of their health. I was amazed to find that malaria had weakened their con-

stitution to such an extent that imprisonment had caused them to go blind.

"Though I do not blame the British people, I do blame the designless, pitiless industrial process carried on by the British in conjunction with some of our rich men. If they had been careful there would be no such deplorable state of health in which you find the people today. I will gladly agree with you that the masses are not to be let off without criticism. A nation generally gets the kind of sanitation that it tolerates. Our country has neither the complete sanitary arrangement of a fully industrialized society, nor does it enjoy the ancient agricultural canal-drainage system of the past which Sir William Wilcox insists kept us healthy. Then I do not know that outside of the pure sciences, and the medical science of Europe, such branches of science as industrialism are good for our country.[1]

"It seems to me all Hindus dislike machinery! Probably it is because they have had a handicraft-civilization for fifty centuries. A change from that in a short time into industrialism must impinge upon their nervous system terribly. Too bad the thing has to take place at all."

Before closing I shall transcribe the doctor's answer to my most important question. I put it bluntly: "What will you gain by driving the British out of India by a non-violent revolution?"

His answer was not quite scientific. He pondered a

[1] That conscienceless industrialization has ruined Bengal is not the view of one person. Not only Indian doctors but also the British health officers of the Province hold that opinion. See Ross Institute Report in London *Times*, June 19, 1929.

while, then said, "By endeavoring to drive them out we shall heal India of cowardice. What economic gains will accrue from it I care not to think of. But the spiritual gain will be fabulous. We will be cured of cowardice, and the British will be freed from their fetish of superiority. Cowardice and arrogance are eating the souls of India and England. Those two fiends should be exorcised, no matter how."

"But, my friend, the heavy price in blood, is it worth the exorcising?"

He answered with finality, "Any price, yes. No cost is too great for such an important end. We must allow them to kill us till they have satiated their sense of superiority. And we should not hesitate to sacrifice our lives till it destroys by surfeiting the monster of fear. We shall not shed theirs, but they will shed our blood, as Gandhi says."

* * * * * *

But Mr. Eagles forgot to ask my brother one important question: namely, how to unite the Hindus with the Mohammedans. For without a solid unity between half the Mohammedans, say thirty millions of them, and fifty millions of Hindus, India cannot put up a sustained non-resistance to the strongest empire in the world. Without that unity India can be beaten as easily as a child can be chastized by a prize-fighter.

That the problem of India is one of disunity no true patriot can overlook. Disease and industrialism are beside the point. I waited before mentioning this to my brother. As the span of his stay in Calcutta permitted

by the C.I.D. drew to its end I decided to broach the subject. After listening to me patiently he answered, "Let us first go to Kalighat to pray for our ancestors. Now that we are together once more we must do what would please our parents in Devaloka (Heaven). After our prayers we shall discuss India's unity."

CHAPTER XXIV

IN KALIGHAT

KALIGHAT is a suburb of Calcutta. To the foreign tourist the name means only the place of the slaughtering of sacrificial goats. But those who know languages and symbolism will find spiritual truths on which we should do well to meditate.

In Kalighat the Goddess Kali is worshiped by thousands of pilgrims every week. It is one of the sacred places of India. It is said that in a place of pilgrimage the atmosphere is so charged with spirituality that we pray better there.

"I would have liked to go to Benares," my brother said. "There one can pray better than in any other place on earth. But the time at my disposal won't permit it. So let us go to Kalighat to say Tarpan (Prayers), for our Pitris (Fathers). Once more at least, our voices shall mingle in singing as they used to when we were children. Who knows, I may be dead within a year's time! Then you shall pray alone, and keep up the ancient rite."

Praying for one's ancestors is an old custom with us. Every few years a man stands waist deep in a holy stream and with eyes shut chants hymns to God. It is a voluntary act. No priest nor any other outsider takes part in it.

On my brother's last day in Calcutta we set out before dawn. We got off from the tramcar at Kalighat station and walked barefoot to the river. Already many pilgrims had reached the Ghaut, and were bathing in the holy water.

We followed their example without any delay. The water was excessively cold for it was winter, but nobody minded it.

After our ablutions we stood where the water came up to our waist, and began to pray: "Where the Ayam girvi pariskrita—the songs of the Gods cleanse your paths, O fathers, harken thence, and listen for our prayers to God. . . ."

We prayed nearly thirty minutes. Now slowly the sun rose turning the little river into a lilac stream. Above us the steps of the Ghaut were filled with men, women, and children worshipers dressed in red and white.

We left the water and after changing into dry clothes set out for the Shrine. On our way we bought flowers, fruits, leaves, and sweetmeats for our offering to Kali. We had to saunter through masses of people and cows before we could reach the grey temple of the Mother. After making our offerings inside to the All-Good, Sarva Mangala Mangylye, we went to the piazza where we sat and meditated. That is to say, my brother did all the meditating, while I watched the traffic. I was keen to see everything.

From the Nat Mundeer (the piazza) where two holy men, scores of honest pilgrims, and about a hundred fakirs were meditating I looked below at the yard where

the Kamar (the sacrificer) with a vast hatchet in hand was making ready for the goat sacrifice.

Pilgrim after pilgrim, men, women, and children, passed by. Red, white, and red again were the colors dominating the spectacle. About half-past eight a big black goat profusely garlanded with vines and red oleanders was brought to the Kamar.

The phlegmatic beast kept on eating the oleanders, unmindful of his coming doom. Now and then he peered at every one with a sort of sneering look. That was all. Suddenly from nowhere came a priest in a white loin-cloth, his eyes blazing with devotion. He chanted to the goat, "You are the symbol of man's sexual desire. By sacrificing you he sacrifices every evil wish." The animal gave him a sneering glance, then reached towards his own hind quarters to get at the last two oleanders hanging from his tail. I turned that instant and spoke to my meditating brother, "That black goat is the most swanky person here."

He answered without opening his eyes, "You don't have to talk. That aberration that you call your mind is noisy enough without the clamor of your tongue." As I looked away from him I beheld the sacrificed animal lying on the ground. Now began the business end of the ceremony. The owner of the goat said, "I sacrificed for my sins. Now that they are cleansed I don't care who eats the animal's carcass. . . . I am a vegetarian." So the Kamar who was wiping his hatchet with sand said aloud, "I accept it. Give the priest his four cents. I will sell the goat to the butcher who will be here soon and thus will pay me for my labors." Again I spoke

aloud, "That transaction is over. . . . Here comes another goat."

This poor beast too was sacrificed not for sins but because its owner was a meat-eater and would not eat any other kind than that of goats killed after a blessing by a priest. The man said, "It is not the meat, it is the blessing poured on the animal before sacrifice that makes its flesh so health-giving. I have an erratic digestion, I need blessed meat."

I whispered more to myself than to my brother, "This fellow is going in for vitamines."

The rest of the morning I noticed all the sacrifices were made either for vitamines or to wipe away carnal sin. I wondered then and still am wondering if by praying over the beasts their food value is not augmented to the eater, and if all the animals that are slaughtered in America would not gain in their power to nourish us if we thought that they were improved by prayer. I do not care to eat any article of diet on which my mind has not placed a high value. I think praying over goats or grace before dining each in its way creates a thought which we assimilate with our dinner.

While I was cogitating in the above manner an amusing sight took place. Two of the fakirs standing near us who were posing as holy men suddenly exclaimed, "Behold two foreigners photographing the butcher's work. Let us catch their attention, since foreigners are most generous."

As they moved away my eyes followed them and I discovered that the foreigners in question were Mrs. Bolt and her little son, Ananda.

No sooner had the Americans photographed the goat sacrifice than the two fakirs were upon them for baksheesh.

"Darling," I heard Mrs. Bolt exclaim in English, "here are two holy men. You give them eight annas (sixteen cents) while I take their pictures."

I felt like crying to her from my perch, "They are not holy men!"

But I realized that it would be futile. Tourists heed no warning. In fact, all tourists enjoy being deceived. In the past I have seen so many people taken in by our Babajis (beggars in holy men's garb) in spite of my warnings that I have formed the habit of not exposing these palpable and petty rascals.

Now I heard my brother saying, "It is ten. Do you desire to go on wasting time? Or do you care to do something sensible? I prefer to meditate. Only don't whisper to me any more."

After he had again sunk into contemplation I resumed watching the traffic. . . .

I have refrained to give here the explanation of the symbolism of Kali, the Goddess of Kalighat, because the reader can read it in "Caste and Outcast" and "The Face of Silence."

It seemed that too swiftly the morning had passed. Soon the goat-sacrifice was over. My brother and I took boat from Kalighat and had ourselves rowed four miles up the river to our home.

As the red and white of the Kalighat crowd receded and as the lines grew dented with Ghauts and houses rose-red, white, and blue, I asked my last question of my

elder. For after a while one talked of India's political future in his presence, no matter where.

"Frankly speaking," I begged him, "is there unity between enough Mohammedans and our Hindus to give you any hope for India's independence?"

"You have become a terrible shop-keeper during the past sixteen years," he groaned.

"I consider that living and dying for a cause nearest to one's heart, irrespective of results, is true life. Karmanyevadikaraste—A man should labor without calculating the earthly results of his striving . . .

"However, my knowledge of India today confirms me in my conclusion that there are nearly twenty per cent. Mohammedan brothers who will give their lives in a fight against any invader, Mohammedan or Christian. They are Indians first and Mohammedans afterwards. Similarly there are about the same number of our co-religionists who are Indians first and Hindus afterwards.

"If sixty million people cannot start a movement for independence, then nothing will ever free India. Sacrifice of our own lives alone will inspire the sluggards to strive for India's freedom. Let us give a good account of ourselves. That is all I want. Everything is in our favor. The British are armed. We are unarmed. The British want to use force and we to use non-violence. Our means as well as our end being noble, it is a foregone conclusion that our side has the moral support of humanity. Even defeat after a strenuous effort is better than living in the perpetual self-doubt as the result of having given no account of one's self to other men.

"No, I cannot wait for a complete unity of eighty

million Musselmans with two hundred million Hindus. Unity will come through the sacrifice of our own lives. The solidarity of all the Indians will come through the death of the first few millions. Tyaktena Bhunjitha—let us realize the supreme end by renouncing our little selves."

But the reader may wonder if the sacrifice of young men would in fact do good. Or would they be butchered like animals? I do not know. The scriptures say that "Truth will triumph in the end." If Indian nationalism contains the seed of Satya (truth) the future will reveal it. As for the present, it is inchoate and gives no basis for a trustworthy prophecy.

* * * * * *

That evening my sister, Mr. Eagles, and I went to the station to see my brother off to his place of exile. I was not sorry for the boy, for he believed in the immortality of the human soul. He will never die. All the same I felt sorry—for India; for all her good young sons, whether my brother or Jawaharlal Nehru, whom she may lose within the next two years. If such material is wasted, what will take its place?

CHAPTER XXV

GANDHI AND MR. EAGLES

THE day following my brother's departure Mr. Eagles was invited to spend a few hours with Gandhi. The latter being a master of the English language I did not have to go with my friend to interpret for him.

What the two had discussed my sister and I learned later. I remember it vividly. It was an exceptionally warm evening. We sat on our roof under the star-lit sky. Nothing stirred in our immediate neighborhood. Far off the city of Calcutta breathed like a hound asleep.

Mr. Eagles said, "Gandhi has answered all my questions. He evaded nothing. That fellow is indescribable. I generally notice shapes and colors particularly colors of eyes and face, but I don't remember anything about Gandhi. The fellow is so selfless that I cannot make a picture of him in my mind. I don't understand it! There is not a single vanity, whether of virtue or of vice, by which you can appraise the man."

"But what did he say, Mr. Eagles?" I asked.

"Well, I am coming to that. You know, you are in a hurry. I find that all of you American-educated Hindus are in a great hurry. I have discovered that re-

cently. Compared with you, I am as slow as an elephant. Well, about Gandhi—it is hard to tell, for it isn't what he said, but what he said it with.

"First of all, he explained to me why he wants the British to leave. He said that the Hindus were afraid of the British and that the whole country was diseased with fear and servility. The old man gave this illustration: The people of the province of the Punjab, who were considered the bravest in India, provide the largest bulk of recruits to the army of Indian mercenaries. They are all commanded by English officers. But he said that when he reached the Punjab after the massacre of Amritsar in 1919, he found them all—the Punjabis—more afraid of the British than the people in other provinces. The British rule had reduced a human community to a condition of terrorized animals. The disease of fear must be healed, he said, and the only formula that he had found to accomplish this was meditation on courage and action without hate. If his spinning-wheel movement does nothing else, it has, he assured me, at least created one united activity in India. Every group spins together. He repeated that he wished to heal his people of fear and disunity. The British would leave India when the people had purified and healed themselves. He concluded by stating that his nation did not mind having British friends but they did not want them as masters. 'It is not healthy to be slaves,' he said to me, which to a Yankee sounds reasonable!"

"But you did not have to go to Gandhi to find that out," said I.

"If you want to learn something about aeroplanes,

you have to go to the Wright brothers and listen to them. I went to Gandhi as to an authority on the situation in India," Mr. Eagles retorted.

"What else did you ask him?"

My friend replied, "He seemed to anticipate my questions, and answered them before they were asked. We next touched upon non-violent resistance. I don't know why Gandhi chooses this phrasing. What sense is there to the expression 'non-violent resistance'? However, this is what he said: 'If you resent violence done by the other man, you must not resist him with violence. Your resentment is not against another man but against his violence. By killing him you solve no problem, because *he* is not the problem. The problem is his *violent action*. If by doing violence you could solve the problem of your neighbor's action, I would say 'Good, indulge in it!'

"Don't you think that is remarkably well put?" Mr. Eagles asked me.

"Rather prosaically put. Other Oriental teachers have said it better."

Then I quoted "As a mother at the risk of her life protects her child, so should you do good to him who does you harm, for brethren return not hatred for hatred, but give love for hatred. Love alone can heal hatred. If a man take a two-handed sword and cut off your legs, even then there should be no hate in your heart!"

I quoted from another Holy Man: " 'Return not evil for evil; return good for evil. A true man sees the same God in other people as he perceives within his own soul. Hence, he treats others with the same veneration and

appreciation which he renders to the God within himself. That man is living truly a life of religion who knows that the love which sets the heart free is selfless love indeed.' . . . Don't you think this is better than the prosaic speech of Gandhi's?"

Mr. Eagles paused, looked at me with a hurt expression in his eyes, and replied, "Gandhi's prose goes to my heart. I don't need poetic phrasings from him. You know, the little man said to me, 'I want to be clear to everyone and to make myself understood. Being beautiful has never tempted me.'

"And he said, 'I have nothing new in my message of non-violence. It has been said infinitely better by spiritual teachers in the past. My emphasis may be new, but not my message.' On my asking if he really wanted the British to go, he answered that if their present mentality would go, *they* might stay."

I asked him about Gandhi's attitude of antagonism toward the industrialization of India. "Do you agree with him, Mr. Eagles?"

"I don't see why I should not. The factory, industrialism, is a product of the north where there is no sun. Northern Europe invented industrialism because northern Europe has no hot sun eight months of the year. In this hot climate few factories are necessary. Why should the hitherto untamed machine monster of the western civilization and northern environment from which it was a natural growth be thrust into this tropical climate —especially into a country like India where an ancient civilization still exists? Gandhi is right in saying that this thing has not yet been humanized. Suppose you took

a wild elephant from the Indian jungle, would you be permitted to let it loose on Forty-second Street and Fifth Avenue? No. Well, similarly, mechanical civilization of the West, modern industrialism not yet tamed and civilized, having been let loose upon India, is acting like a mad elephant. The rich are growing richer, and the poor poorer." My friend is becoming a better Oriental than the Orientals, I thought.

I interrupted to say, "You have listened to Gandhi too well. You are agreeing with him too completely."

"But," Mr. Eagles resumed his discussion, "Gandhi disappointed me."

"What do you mean," I said. "How did he disappoint you? Have you found any flaw in his character?"

"In the West," replied my friend, "we have imagined that Gandhi's political creed was based on some mystical experience, but this is not the case. When I asked him if he had seen God, he said that he had not. I tell you this was a blow. Though he believes that all life is spiritual and all existence is divine, yet he cannot prove it from any inner knowledge."

"What else did you ask him?" said my sister.

"Tell her as much as you can of our saint," said I.

My friend resumed his story, "I hope you will excuse me for having asked Gandhi some trivial questions. Here are some of them. I asked 'What do you think of the violent Hindu revolutionists that the papers write about?' "

" 'Non-violence,' replied Gandhi, 'which the country is exhibiting at the present day is on a scale unprecedented in history. But for it there might have been

a blaze, for provocation of the gravest kind has not been wanting on the side of the Government. There is no doubt that there is a school in the country that believes in violence; but it is a mere excrescence on the surface and its ideals are not likely to find a congenial soil in the country.'

"Now I asked, 'What causes you worry for the future of the country?'

" 'Our apathy and hardness of heart, if I may use that Biblical phrase, as typified in the attitude towards the masses and their poverty,' replied Gandhi. 'Our youth are full of noble feelings and impulses but these have not yet taken any definite practical shape. If our youth had a living and active faith in truth and non-violence, for instance, we should have made much greater headway by now. All our young men, however, are not apathetic. In fact, without the closest co-operation of some of our educated young men and women I should not have been able to establish contact with the masses and to serve them on a nationwide scale; and I am sustained by the hope that they will act as the leaven, and in time transform the entire mass.'

"From this we passed on to the distinctive contributions of Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity to the upbuilding of the Indian nation. 'The most distinctive and the largest contribution of Hinduism to India's culture is the doctrine of *ahimsa* (non-hate). It has given a definite bias to the history of the country for the last three thousand years and over and it has not ceased to be a living force in the lives of India's millions even today. It is a growing doctrine, its message is still being de-

livered. Its teaching has so far permeated our people that an armed revolution has almost become an impossibility in India, not because as some would have it, we as a race are physically weak, for it does not require much physical strength so much as a devilish will to press a trigger to shoot a person, but because the tradition of *ahimsa* has struck deep root among the people.'

"Referring to Islam he mentioned as its distinctive contribution to India's national culture 'its unadulterated belief in the oneness of God and a practical application of the truth of the brotherhood of man for those who are nominally within its fold. I call these two distinctive contributions. For in Hinduism the spirit of brotherhood has become too much philosophized. Similarly, though philosophical Hinduism has no other god but God, it cannot be denied that practical Hinduism is not so emphatically uncompromising as Islam.'

" 'What then is the contribution of Christianity to the national life of India? I mean the influence of Christ as apart from Christianity.' I sought to know his opinion.

" 'Aye, there lies the rub,' replied Gandhi. 'It is not possible to consider the teaching of a religious teacher apart from the lives of his followers. Unfortunately, Christianity in India has been inextricably mixed up for the last one hundred and fifty years with the British rule. It appears to us as synonymous with materialistic civilization and imperialistic exploitation by the stronger white races of the weaker races of the world. Its contribution to India has been therefore largely of a negative character. It has done some good in spite of its

professors. It has shocked us into setting our own house in order. Christian missionary literature has drawn pointed attention to some of our abuses and set us athinking.'

"Now I asked him whether he subscribed to the hypothesis of increased wealth of the country under British rule as some statisticians maintain. It made him almost indignant. He poured forth his criticism of those statisticians thus:

" 'It has been truly said by economists themselves that statistics can be made to prove two contradictory propositions. It is therefore necessary for a prudent man who is not concerned with merely proving a preconceived proposition but who is concerned solely with finding the truth to probe beneath statistics and test independently every proposition deduced from them. It is no doubt good to know the average depth of a river, but a non-swimmer who on learning that its average depth is below his height attempts to ford it is likely to find a watery grave. Even so will a man lose reputation for sanity who relies upon the mirage of statistics dressed up for him.

" 'Eye-witnesses including English administrators whose interest it would be to find the contrary have testified that India has been growing poorer under the British regime. Go to the villages and you will find misery and despair written in the faces of the inhabitants. Both they and their cattle are underfed; mortality is on the increase, they have no resisting power when disease overtakes them. It is well known that malaria is not a disease to dread if one has quinine and a good

supply of pure milk. Yet malaria carries away thousands of villagers year by year. They may have quinine thrown at them but they cannot get milk for the convalescent period.

" 'Their indebtedness is increasing. It is a blasphemy to impute it to marriage expenses and the like. These are no new charge on their dwindling purse. The story of hoarded wealth and conversion of silver coin into ornaments is a fable. Millions own no silver or gold ornaments. They wear hideous wooden, even stone, bangles and rings which interfere with their free movement and undermine their health. Their illiteracy is if anything on the increase. These are no signs of growing prosperity.

" 'Now let us glance at the nature of exports and imports. The exports in 1927-28 were Rs. 309 crores, the imports over Rs. 231 crores. The exports were principally raw products, *e.g.*, cotton, food grains, oil seeds, hides and skins, metals and ores. These could have remained in India if we had skill and capital enough to put into them or if we had a government that would regard it as its bounden duty to give us the necessary skill and to find the necessary capital.'

"Then I asked my last two questions. 'Do you want the British to go from India?' His answer was interesting.

" 'No,' replied Gandhi, 'on the contrary, I should like to keep the English here, but on our terms—not as lords and masters but as true servants of the people. In a free India the English shall have to be content with an equal status with the sons of the soil which means that they

must renounce the special privileges which they at present enjoy as members of the ruling race.'

"Of course my last question was about the Pariahs, the untouchable forty millions. Gandhi began by pointing out the parallel problem of the Negro race in America. 'Yet,' he said, 'there can be no true comparison between the two. They are dissimilars. Depressed and oppressed as the untouchable is in his own land, there is no legal discrimination in force against him as it is in the case of the Negro in America. Then, though our orthodoxy sometimes betrays a hardness of heart that cannot but cause deep anguish to a humanitarian, the superstitious prejudice against the untouchable never breaks out into such savage fury as it does sometimes in America against the Negro. The lynching of the Negro is not an uncommon occurrence in America. But in India such things are impossible because of our tradition of nonviolence. Not only that, the humanitarian sentiment in India has so far prevailed against caste prejudice as to result even in the canonization of individual untouchables. We have several untouchable saints. I wonder whether you have any Negro saints among you. The prejudice against untouchability is fast wearing out. I wish somebody could assure me that the tide of color prejudice had spent itself in America.'

"I asked him further, 'Does not the disunity of all castes stand in the way of Indian freedom? The disunity of the Negro and the Whites of America raises no such problem.'

"Gandhi said without hesitation: 'I realize that even your Negroes have a love of country that our unlynched

Pariahs lack. That is why I want to abolish the Pariah's caste. I want unity at any cost among our people. I want to unite classes, creeds, and sexes. No matter how difficult the work, it must be carried out. In two years' time we shall show such changes in India that the world will be astounded. And the entire program will be carried through without violence.' "

CHAPTER XXVI

MR. EAGLES AT OUR TEMPLE

THE next few days I spent in preparing Mr. Eagles' mind for his visit to the heart of our temple, and I told him that though the caste system was breaking down and the ancient prejudices were vanishing, there was still a doubt whether I would be allowed to conduct the service of our temple as I wished to do. "There is grave doubt also whether I can show you the holy of holies."

"I hope you will succeed," he said, "I think you will. When are we going to see this through?"

After mentioning the appointed day, I suggested that in the meantime we visit the jute factories of Calcutta and other horrors. "Since you want to see all you can," I added maliciously.[1]

There is nothing more abysmal in degradation than the factories and laborers' homes of my city. Out of the innumerable jute factories, a majority of which are owned by European and American stockholders, we found a few which had day nurseries, called 'crêches,'

[1] The reader should he go to Calcutta must not overlook the Bharhut Stupa remains in the museum there. In this collection he will find the art of 300 B.C. of Northern India very well preserved. Beginning with Bharhut the visitor by examining specimen after specimen can trace the development of Indian art to the present day without going outside the Calcutta museum.

where little babies might be left comfortably during the time the mothers were at work, sometimes nine hours a day. The numerous factories that had no crêches revealed appalling conditions. We found that some mothers were in the habit of giving sly doses of opium to their infants to keep them quiet while they worked. It may seem a shameful accusation to make against the British, but it is a well established fact that opium is a monopoly of the British government in India, and that if the Christian rulers of India would put a stop to its public sale throughout the country, they would establish their own self-respect on a more secure foundation. Again and again the Indian people's representatives have protested against the opium monopoly, but the government has turned a deaf ear to their pleading.

Next to opium, the other evils of the factory are the terrible sanitation, not only in the homes of the workers, but around the factories themselves. The stench of the factory districts is their striking characteristic. We do not need to elaborate further.

It is usual to find children at work in the factories, though there are laws to protect children below eight. The laws supposed to protect those above that age are observed mostly in the breach.

In all the agricultural districts of India that we had visited we found nothing to equal the horrors of Calcutta. And yet it seems to the credit of the Indian factory workers that compared with New York, Paris, and Berlin, evils such as sex irregularity, prostitution, etc., are much less than in these European cities.

In Bombay, Calcutta, and other industrialized cities

the toll of epidemic is heavier than anywhere else. The death rate in the agricultural districts is much lower.

Though they distressed Mr. Eagles, yet he sought for Calcutta's horrors. He wanted to study them all.

At last one day I said to him, "See here! If I continue to translate all this for you, it will convert my brain cells into drain pipes, and that is the one use that Providence did not intend for them. It is time to return to our temple-ceremony."

It took place on a magnificent evening. The air was filled with a blue mist. Here and there the stars hung like golden grapes.

The temple court was filled with people robed in white. The audience had assembled on the spacious veranda at the foot of the inner shrine. In the large doorway of that shrine I sat with the sacred book open under the light of a great brass lamp about two centuries old. Behind stood my white-robed sister.

While she was preparing her announcement, I scanned the faces of the crowd. The one that arrested my attention was that of Mr. Eagles. He had grown biscuit-colored in two months' time. I watched his eyes which were on my sister. Now she was speaking.

I shut my eyes and listened, "O, assembled civilized people," she called upon them, "my brother has remained a Brahmin despite his travels, and he now wishes to read an Upanishad as of old."

I opened my eyes. My sister seated herself alongside of me. There rose a murmur in the crowd, whether of protest or approval, I could not make out. I shut the

book that was before me, and began to recite from memory. I made the invocation, and the moment the people heard my accent, I caught murmurs of approval: "He does not return to us like a sinful mouse. He rises up like our own lion cub. Hearken to his recitation of the scripture!"

"Salutation to Brahma! Salutation! In the beginning all existence was soul, there was nothing else, not even a moment of creation. The soul considered, 'Shall I create the worlds?' and the very thought precipitated the universe. So all was created, water, death, and the invisible. After this the soul thought, 'Shall I create a shepherd for these worlds?' So he took a little water, and made man, and as he looked upon his latest creation, the human face blossomed, as the little hawk breaks his way from the egg. Then the word leapt from man's mouth, and in the word dwelt flame. Then the nostrils became defined, and through them life shot its arrows, the breath. Eyes filled empty sockets and from the eyes shot forth the sun. The ears stretched themselves, hearing hummed within, and from the humming came the corners of space, the nests of sound. Then the skin (grew) sensitive, put forth hair, as herbs and trees grow on the skin of the earth. At last came the heart, and the heart for its servant brought the mind. The mind gave birth to the moon and was clothed with its white tranquillity. In this manner also the gods were created with man, and they sank into the sea of time and space with him. Then God gave to man thirst and hunger.

"The gods, the sun and moon, the earth and the sea, who had been created with man, clamored before God,

asking for a refuge. The Creator made a cow shape and showed it to them but they said, 'It is too small.' Then the Lord brought a horse shape, and they said, 'It is unworthy of us!' Then the Lord brought before them man and they exclaimed, 'How beautiful! Let us dwell within Him!' So man came to contain the gods. 'But each in his appointed place,' said the Lord, so fire became the speech of the human mouth, the sun became the tenant of the eyes, and the spaces became the silence and the hearing of the ears. Then (the sense of) touch came, quickening the skin and the hair into sense and feeling, the moon spread her serenity over the mind, and last of all, death entered the heart."

After an hour's recital and explanation, I concluded the ceremony. I then introduced to the crowd Mr. Eagles, who made a very simple speech. I translated to them the last part of it: "Thirty years ago Mr. Eagles, an American boy, heard a Hindu speak. His name was Vivekananda. . . ."

My friend did not have to say more. The old men of the assembly exclaimed, "He is one of us because Vivekananda blessed him! Jai—victory."

It was amazing how that word 'Vivekananda' unlocked hearts more quickly than a royal command opened dungeon gates. Mr. Eagles became great friends with these people, and the following week which we spent in Calcutta he frequently visited our temple and its neighborhood. He was called Eagal Rishi, which means holy eagle. After this experience, wherever we went in India, we used Vivekananda's name and it never failed to open doors which were locked. The reader will

see how in Benares Mr. Eagles was admitted to the holy of holies as a friend of Vivekananda.

In my "Face of Silence" I have portrayed Vivekananda. Here I will only say that he was sent by India to the world's Congress of Religions held in Chicago in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Among people whom he convinced of the greatness of Hindu philosophy was William James. The reader will do well to consult the latter's "Pragmatism."

On his return to India, Vivekananda was greeted with acclaim as the creator of aggressive Hinduism. He toured all India crying, "Arise, awake, proclaim your glory."

This quickened the younger generation who christened the master "the father of our nationalism." Though Vivekananda has been dead a quarter of a century, the seeds that he flung abroad have borne ample fruits. India reawakened is marching forward.

Because of his services as a teacher, millions of Hindus bow down when his name is mentioned.

From now on Mr. Eagles was a guest in Hindu homes, and how he was loved there I cannot begin to describe. Some day when he publishes his diary, the world will have a true picture of a Hindu home. He used to say, "My friend, whenever I go to your sister's house, I feel as if I had entered a shrine. She treats me like her brother. Vivekananda's name has wrought magic."

"Well," said I, "you can now go back to your America and tell them there that you did not see all women unhappy, everyone reeking in filth, and children living in atrocious immorality in India!"

Mr. Eagles retorted, "Now, come, practice your old forbearance! If some unthinking tourist judges your country's home life by its market place, it is nothing new. In America we are used to it; we pay foreigners to attack us. In India you have at least the advantage of not paying them. That is something."

Poet Mrinalini Sen. First Brahmin widow to break the five-century-old custom. She married again after a few years of her first husband's death.

CHAPTER XXVII

ASSEMBLY OF POETS

OUR next experience in Calcutta was to visit the poets and artists who live there. The art colony of the Tagores is very important, and anyone can see it for the asking. But owing to the kindness of the Hindu poet, Suresh Banerji, Mr. Eagles and I were invited to a meeting of the Literary Congress of India. It assembled in the house of a very rich man.

Mr. Banerji is a well known author and poet. In recent months his sociological novel had stirred up a great deal of comment throughout the province, and it was our good fortune to be introduced to the assembly of Indian writers by him. Almost all of them knew English and sometimes two or three more languages.

This assembly of poets following on the heels of the political Congress gave us an epitome of India's culture. It was presided over by the hart-eyed Nazrul Islam, the greatest living Bengali poet, a Mohammedan. Ikhbal, the mystic warrior, also a Mohammedan, had come a long distance to take part in the Congress.

There were many famous women poets of whom Mrs. Roy and Mrinalini Devi need special mention.

Mrinalini became poetess some forty years ago. Her life, though retired, had touched millions of people

through her poems which from out of the seclusion of her home went forth from bazaar to bazaar and from city to city. About thirty years ago her first husband died, but instead of consenting to remain a Brahmin widow, Mrinalini broke the age-old custom and married again, and moreover, she married out of caste. Her conduct helped the social reformers of India enormously. In short, she has been not only a poet, but a practitioner of revolt.

Mr. Eagles was thrilled when I pointed her out to him. In India pointing is done openly and above board.

Next to Mrinalini sat the South Indian Brahmin poet, Bharati, of whom, the reader will remember, we had heard from Guru Narayana in Mysore. Bharati, the revolutionary Brahmin, looked very delicate and regal—almost a living copy of King Tut. It is said in India that the South Indians have Egyptian blood, and that what in the Egyptian papyri is called the land of Punt is really southern India.

I have already intimated that the assembly met in the house of a rich man. We gathered on the roof of the house, which was so enormous that it looked like a bazaar.

"Nowadays," I whispered to Mr. Eagles, "our modern poets, like their fellow-craftsmen elsewhere, meet in the homes of the rich. As in Venice of the Middle Ages, the merchants of commercial Calcutta patronize the arts. That is why the congress of Indian poets had to meet in such a place as this."

The mansion itself was a strange mixture of the

French renaissance and Mogul Indian style of architecture, completely typical of the taste of the newly rich. Fortunately on this dusty January day its spacious flat roof afforded us a view of the entire town instead of an interior of plush furniture and baroque wall decorations imported from England. Roof after roof, yellow, white, and rose-colored, over which palm trees bent their heads, stretched to the farthest horizon. Below us the honk of taxis, the bells of street cars, and voices of street criers rose, scale by scale, octave by octave, then went down again with the same gradualness. It seems that noise is the breathing of cities. The breathing of Calcutta is not altogether ugly because of the numberless street cries that almost drown the mechanical sounds of wheels and bells. Just now, for instance, there were three human voices crying, one basso profundo and two tenors, saying, "Ice in tubes," "Cool curds," and "Perfume that placates the nostrils."

But I had to give up listening to street cries for the "hart-eyed" Nazrul Islam, our greatest poet was speaking to the "assembled civilized" people. About two hundred men and women in white Gandhi-cloth and Gandhi-turbans sat cross-legged and listened. It was astonishing how the poet's voice rose in crescendo till it comprised almost all the human cries in the streets below. Every sound became a part of his voice.

"What is he saying?" whispered Mr. Eagles.

After Nazrul had finished amid loud plaudits of "Sadhu, sadhu"—blessed, blessed—I translated the last figure of speech of the poet.

"Blow your flame-trumpet, O poets, the tide has reached its full.
Should the votaries of beautiful speech fail to master the meter and rhythm of deeds?
No, No ——— blow your flame-trumpets,
Ride action like a steed . . .
Storm the ramparts of glory."

The next person to speak was Mrinalini Sen, the poet who had truly ridden action like a steed about a quarter of a century ago.

Her face expressed a great delicacy and great resistance. Though compassion was her very nature, realism gave edge to her intellect. Her speech was short, uneloquent, and incisive, the most telling speech that human ear could hear.

After various men and women had spoken, Ekbal, "the lord of language," rose. In his fierce Semitic visage were set eyes aglow with mystic passion. He recited that one song of his which is sung in every national gathering all over India:

"Hindusthan Hamara, India mine."

Its effect was very painful. The rock has to break in order to permit the river to leap out of it. The entire assembly literally broke down at the song of Ekbal. Only silence followed his singing. No one dared applaud.

"Since poets wish to feel and fathom emotions," the president Nazrul proclaimed, "we had better disperse to garner the ideas created by our brother Ekbal's poem. He has given us not a song but a scimitar." Silently the company rose to go.

On our way to the hotel I explained to Mr. Eagles the power of Ekbal. "His influence is not confined to India alone. Wherever Persian is read, his songs are sung. Because he writes both in Persian and Hindustani people in the Near East sing him. His influence is enormous. He, an Indian mystic, is second to no Mohammedan, whether of Turkey, Arabia, or Persia."

Just then a beggar broke into my harangue with these lines:

> "Still your quarrel about Allah, Krishna, and Christ,
> Creeds are bones—fit for a dog's teeth.
> What the soul needs is a vision of Him
> Who has no name, for all names are His."

When Mr. Eagles had heard it to the end, he took out a rupee and gave it to the beggar whose face was almost lost under his long hair and beard, though his eyes mirrored gratitude.

CHAPTER XXVIII

MR. EAGLES IS ENTERTAINED BY THE WEALTHY

ALAS, though the streets of Calcutta were ringing with many beggar-songs of real beauty, we could not stay to listen, for Mr. Eagles had to return to his hotel to dress. Suresh Banerji, the poet, was to pilot him to the house of a wealthy friend, Mr. Dash, for dinner. They went together in the direction of Bullygunge—the Tuxedo Park of Calcutta. What took place there may be gathered from the following excerpts from my friend's letter to Mrs. Eagles.

* * * * * * *

"Compared with the newly rich of India," wrote Mr. Eagles, "our American Babbitts are paragons of public spirit and culture. The reason seems to be that in India the caste system centuries ago placed the spiritual lords,—the Brahmins,—on the pinnacle of society. They have had centuries in which to cultivate themselves. The same is true with the members of the warrior caste, the Rajahs and their squires, who come next to the Brahmins. What Plato considered an ideal arrangement existed in India long before his birth, for traders, farmers, and artisans have always formed the third caste in India.

"With the coming of the British, a nation of mer-

chants, the mercantile element of Indian society has been closely drawn to them. It is the commercial Britisher that India sees and does homage to. The Hindus begin now to respect not the old Brahmin's quality of plain living and high philosophy, but the trader's love of success in earthly matters. When it comes to succeeding in material things, the old third caste can easily out-distance the others. Not that all Brahmins and Rajahs have abandoned their ancient virtues and become tradesmen; but such is the degrading effect of constant taking and giving of money that Brahmin, Rajah, and artisan, after a while, all look and act alike.

"The old caste system is not dying, it is selling out to the Vaishya, the third caste who have become internationalists, too. They believe in travel: out of the eighty Hindus whom I met at dinner last night there was no one who had not lived in Monte Carlo, Paris, London, or Berlin. Some of them had been to the United States.

"I should describe the time and place of this dinner before going any further. It was at the palatial home of the Dashes who had made their money in jute. The house, built ten years ago by a famous English architect, looked as big and white as our White House in Washington. We had to walk through acres of green gardens and grottos full of mangoes, jasmine, almonds, and oleander before reaching the spacious front stairs of the edifice.

"Do you imagine for a moment that Hindu men wrapped in elaborate Kashmirian shawls were going up those steps into the house? No. All save my companion, the poet Banerji, wore full European evening dress.

They leaped up these stairs like monkeys, dragging after them their shawl-vestured women. Even among the latter there was one brown lady dressed like a Parisienne. I felt humiliated to think that our Western civilization had plundered these Orientals of their immemorial sense of the beautiful.

"Within the white mansion things were no better. The walls were papered with pictured English lakes and cottages shining like linoleum. But since the gods are not bereft of mercy there was some beauty left—in the livery of the servants who wore long, flowing, yellow cloaks and capes and on their heads fresh green turbans across which ran a scarlet badge.

"I whispered to Banerji, 'Are they all tradesmen by caste?'

" 'Not the servants,' he answered. 'They are Mohammedans.'

"By now our introductions had begun. Mrs. Dash was beautiful in an ivory and red Kashmirian robe. Her husband, in dinner clothes, appeared to be a small dyspeptic plutocrat of no distinction. From the Dashes we moved over to the Cowry family—mother, son, and daughter-in-law. The old lady had the ancient Hindu serenity in her face, and in the rest of her blue-clad person, and her demeanor and carriage told that she belonged to the Mogul period. The quick inquisitive faces of the young Cowrys betrayed abundant unrest and lack of self-assurance.

"After the rest of the introduction had taken place we sat down to dinner. The table, I learned, was of British mahogany. It was covered with Irish linen, French sil-

ver, and Wedgwood china. Instead of Bengali the language spoken was English. Whatever Sanskrit I had at my command was brushed aside as so much fustian. O Shades of Kalidasa and Valmiki!

"I must give them credit however for speaking better English than groups of the same class and number in America and England. I really liked their diction. Between soup and fish, young Mrs. Cowry said, 'The Neeagara,' as she pronounced it, 'slips down in walls of jade, foaming into thundering diamonds.'

" 'So you have toured my country?' I began. 'What else did you like in the States?'

"She responded, 'The canyon. Why do you call it Grand? It sounds so patronizing.'

"Then the conversation swung to European scenes.

"A frog-eyed, olive-complexioned doctor harangued us. 'Switzerland is paradise,' he said. 'How many patients have I not sent to Davos, Arosa, and Montana. Only one per cent died. But if my tubercular patients had stayed here, about forty out of every hundred would be exploring that undiscovered country from whose bourne—you know the rest. No, we have nothing in the Himalayas that touches the Swiss sanatoria.'

" 'Why is it so?' asked Mr. Banerji.

"The frog-face of the doctor stiffened, 'We have no sense of efficiency. The Swiss are like their watches: all regular and right.'

" 'We are not sufficiently wound up, is that it?' asked Banerji.

"The doctor was hit. He launched forth on the glories of Switzerland, and after boring all and sundry

with profuse statistics through the meat and salad, he ended, 'They may live like clocks, but they have life abundantly in Switzerland.'

Mrs. Dash in her contralto demanded, 'Who die most of tuberculosis in India, the men or the women?'

" 'The Mohammedan women, madame,' answered the doctor, 'because they observe stricter Purdah than the Hindu women.'

"Someone from the other end of the table proclaimed, 'I do not find death a subject that assists gastronomy.'

"An Oxford voice sounded from the middle of the room, 'Shut your head, Sircar, he is not discussing death. He is talking shop: doctors always do.'

" 'Lest you forget,' the doctor misquoted.

"The dignified, old Mrs. Cowry wished to know the name of the greatest American author since Emerson. Her son said, 'Rex Beach, Mother.'

" 'No, no!' exclaimed the poet Banerji. 'It is Whitman. Among the living Dreiser is the greatest author. Have you not read his "American Tragedy"? The note of pity in it is profound.'

"The rest of the company confessed that they had not heard of Dreiser, and they pressed me to explain his greatness. You can gather my reluctance to act the literary critic, so I said briefly, 'Dreiser is an artist. But the man I like to read often is Sherwood Anderson.'

"No one except Banerji had heard of Anderson and we dropped American literature for the moment. Now the talk drifted towards prize-fighting, the Dolly Sisters, and Gloria Swanson.

"Since the rich must hear about the richer, during the

A specimen of modern Hindu architecture. Home of a gentleman in Benares.

dessert I was made to speak of Rockefeller, Morgan, Ford, and Mellon. I found that all the Hindus were amazed at the many benefactions of our rich men—the museums, hospitals, churches, schools, art centers, and so forth.

"Mr. Banerji asked, 'Why do they give money away, if they so love to make it?'

" 'Yes, why do they?' came from all sides.

"But before I could answer, the jazz band started playing in a room exclusively kept for dancing. Some of the men and women went thither without waiting for coffee. But I like my coffee.

"In time, when I began to dance, I found the most beautiful girl there as a partner. Say what you like about jazz, this Westernized Hindu girl footed it with great ease and grace. Alas, one should never depart from that rule which is universal in regard to beautiful people. They should be seen, but never heard. When this girl talked, it was of the pleasure resorts of Europe. I am not at all exaggerating when I say that not only this woman, but the majority of the opulent people present, had never seen any of the great Hindu works of art such as Karle and Elura. But they had seen San Marco and the Louvre! Soon I thought I had had enough and proposed to go, but our host, wishing more talk, led my guide, the poet, and myself out of doors. Our hitherto insignificant Mr. Dash, as he walked to and fro among the roses, became another person. The darkness that hid his face allowed his voice to attain full force. He was laying bare his very soul word by word.

" 'Banerji Sahib,' he was saying, 'you did well to em-

brace literature. I know you have to make your living by writing advertisements for a chemical factory, all the same you have done right. Your soul is not hungry. Look at me: I was born to be a potter. But my father gave me the education of a trader. Through sheer luck I became a middleman in the jute business. I bought from the poor peasant and sold to the rich American factories on the Ganges. Behold Calcutta now! Forty years ago when I began there were hardly two jute factories. Now in the place of Ghauts and temples, they are innumerable. These mechanical devices give no peace to their owners nor to their toilers.

" 'Strikes, lockouts, and shootings: I have seen all. Now I should like to renounce everything in order to take the begging bowl. In the past princes could give up all and go in for finding God. But today we, the merchants, can afford no such spiritual luxury. We are chained to our counting-house more securely than any king ever was to his kingdom.'

"Suddenly a voice called us. Our host said, 'Come, I have a surprise for you.'

"Without another word we followed him indoors. After going through a vast hall we entered a room. What do you think he meant by a surprise? It was his radio!

"Panting with excitement, Mr. Dash shouted, 'We've got Pittsburgh! Your country speaking.'

" 'My God!' escaped my lips. This was not a surprise—it was a knockout!

"For ten minutes I listened to a captain of industry prophesying prosperity to the U. S. A. from Pittsburgh.

"At last unable to bear it any longer I pleaded

fatigue and took leave of my multimillionaire host. He pressed us to stay longer, but since both Banerji and I wanted to get away, we said goodnight. The last thing I heard in that White House were these words in the best Oxford, 'Ripping thing, your set, Mr. Dash.'

"As we drove along the river, the clear tropical sky bent so low that it nearly touched us. The boatmen had moored their boats for the night and were busy doing Vajam—singing the praise of God. Stars streamed across the sky, a profusion of twinkling candles, and Mr. Banerji said softly, 'This is India.'

"I am afraid I agreed with him.

"Mr. Banerji's last words to me were: 'I find the newly rich of India utterly lacking in public spirit. They do not pay hush-money to the country by building museums. Nor do they subsidize art schools and hospitals. They are not at all contrite before the world for being rich. Their consciences do not trouble them. In short, unlike your naïve Mr. Babbitt, the rich of India have the courage of their cupidity. They give away nothing.'

"I thought he was too savage in his criticism. I protested, 'My dear sir, you do not like all this because you are out of it. There was a time when you Brahmins—the Mukerjis and the Banerjis—lorded it over these tradespeople. Now, as poetic justice, the underdog is getting your goat as they say in America.'

" 'I beg your pardon!' exclaimed the bewildered poet.

"I did not have the heart to explain what goat-getting means."

CHAPTER XXIX

STORY OF A BRAHMIN WIDOW

I HAVE already described how Mr. Eagles won the love of my sister and other people of our community when he mentioned to them the name of Vivekananda. It was owing to their appreciation of that great teacher that they became more and more friendly.

During our stay in Calcutta, though Mr. Eagles slept at his hotel, he had some of his meals and spent most of his afternoons at our place.

It was during the siesta after one mid-day meal that he and my sister talked. My task consisted of interpreting them to one another.

At my persistent request on that warm January afternoon, while she was resting, seated on the granite palisade of the Ganges she consented to speak.

"Do you see those boats?" she asked. "From my earliest childhood I have watched them carrying mountains of oranges, grain, and scarlet tiles up and down the tawny river. Thirty years ago their sails were dyed with vegetable dyes. They were violet, amber, ruby, and lilac sails. Now we have turquoise, ochre, yellow, and red. The dyes are no longer made from vegetables by the sailors' wives. They are bought by the tinful in the market. Life becomes more and more ready-made each year.

"When I was about six years old, our mother began to train me in the arts of womanhood. It is difficult to unearth all details of my training from memory. Whatever I can remember, I shall submit to your scrutiny.

"First of all came the lessons in personal cleanliness. Hitherto I had bathed myself as a matter of habit. Now mother began to give me reasons for each thing done. She seasoned her commands with charm, and used to tell me that as the flowers were bathed by the dew in the dark of night, a girl must be washed and ready for her day's work before the sun had risen. All the efforts to beautify one's person should be completed before the world opens its eyes. 'Conceal all your efforts,' was another dictum of hers. Now that I am past fifty, I realize the truth of that remark. Though the means are the parents, we must obliterate them when the child is born: the fruits of our labor only, not our laboring the world wants.

"I arose at least half an hour before the morning twilight, for by the time it had passed and the sun had risen I had to be ready for my morning's meditation. Our mother, who got up at four every morning, was already in the meditation-room waiting for her family. As soon as all the girls and some of the men had assembled, the chanting began. Chant for us, brother," my sister commanded me, interrupting herself.

I obeyed, "Twam aksharam paramam veditavyam twamasya vishawasya param nidhanam twam avaya shaswata dharmagopta sanatanastwam purusho mato me: You are the origin—the supreme wisdom from whom the laws of the universe leap like streams. You

are the secreter and the secret of all, O my Master, O my God. Thee I salute."

"The chanting created every morning the proper atmosphere for the quiet that followed," my sister went on. "After holding our mind concentrated on the all-pervading compassion of Silence, we fervently prayed that it might dominate our daily deeds, for deeds are the echoes of thought. The sap in the tree produces the taste in its fruit. Without sound thoughts no person can proceed to right action.

"Our meditation if completely pure, its fruit, in action, will taste of love and forbearance. 'For mind-made and mind-bound are we!' Mano eva jagat sarvam: All of our world is from our mind. Meditation cleanses the mind as water washes the body.

"After the half-hour of Silence, we went to breakfast, which consisted of unseasoned soft beans and milk. When the meal was finished, the daughters did the housework, tidying the bed-rooms, sweeping, and adorning the floors and the walls. By this time all the men were out of the house. The entire world belonged to us, the women.

"We spent at least an hour in 'pooja'—worship of God—each one worshiping what she liked. I made new gods with the Ganges mud ever so often in order to inject some novelty into my worship. Once I fell in love with God as the destroyer of the universe, so I made 'Shiva,' the all-destroyer. Another time I fell in love with Parvati, the mother of all, so I fashioned an image of her in order to think of the motherhood that

was to come to me. Thus symbols became my soul's landmarks.

"But through all the making and unmaking of my gods there were two thoughts I was asked by our mother to hold firmly. The first was very practical. I suggested to my soul that it was not enough that my room, my home, and my walls be dustless. The home of my mind in which I must always live should gather no dust of lovelessness and no moisture of disharmony. 'Love and harmony shall be my floor and walls, and serenity the roof above my head.' There is no sense in having a dustless home, if restlessness and disharmony pervade its spiritual atmosphere. To that end one needs must pray and worship.

"The second thought that was suggested to me proved itself later to be the more practical of the two, but then it sounded very wordy and abstract: it had to do with the mystery of pain. Each woman should be taught the mystery of suffering." My sister paused and smiled. "By the way," she continued, "when young Christian missionaries try to convert me to their religion, I tell them that I understand already the mystery of pain which they call Christ."

"Good Lord, have you too been exposed to missionaries?" questioned Mr. Eagles.

"They seek to learn how a Hindu widow is able to be happy. I am an example of the ordinary Hindu widow.

"I tell these young women," went on my sister, "most of whom have been neither mothers nor widows,

that the crucified god of the West is not at all difficult to understand. The mystery of pain that my mother taught me is identical in essence, and differs only in its symbolism."

"I do not grasp this," murmured Mr. Eagles.

In order to make the matter clear to my American friend, my sister told this story. "One day when I was about ten, my mother and I went on a river-pilgrimage, and we stopped at a village where there was a dearth of food. This is apt to happen after an inundation in East Bengal. After the flood some villages are left without food and fodder for a while. This was exactly the situation at the place to which we had come in a rice barge that autumn. On the barge was more than a ton of rice belonging to merchants of a town further east. We, my mother and I, being guests of her father's rich friends, were received by them on our arrival.

"Our hosts were rich, but alas, even they were eating only one meal a day. They had, on beholding our boat, offered a very high price to the chief bargee for his cargo, which the man had refused to sell. But since the bark was anchored there and was to remain till another sunrise, our friends did not bargain any more at the moment.

"Whatever was left of the afternoon we spent in inspecting the starving village. In the evening after meditation, Mother was asked to make suggestions about how to relieve the famine of the surrounding community. Half an hour passed before she would speak. When pressed repeatedly for her ideas, she asked, 'What right have you to buy that rice in the

barge and give it away to the poor villagers here? Don't you know that it is going to be sold to the stricken people of the next village?' 'But the next village of Paddapore is not stricken as we are,' she was informed.

"Then she laid down the law: 'Let us, all, save the children fast every other day for a week, and by doing so save food for the people here who have not enough for a meal. We shall have every right to give them what we earn by our own fasting.'

"Strange . . . her wishes were obeyed. We fasted the next day without considering the fate of the rice in the barge.

"This was my first great fast. The age of ten is not a bad one for such an undertaking. I did not mind the first day of starvation. It was exciting. The next day whatever we had saved was distributed to the villagers. Afterwards each one of us ate our one meal of half a pound of rice with a pinch of salt. Soon the twenty-four hours passed bringing in its wake the second fast-day. On this occasion I felt the pangs of hunger terribly. But I held to my determination till nightfall when I fell asleep.

"I shall not dwell on the details of the experience. Towards the middle of that week, all the people past twenty, instead of fasting on alternate days, fasted continually for nearly three. At the end of that time, after a solemn meditation, they ate a quarter of a pound of rice each. In the meantime every morsel of food that had been saved through our abstention was sent out to the more unfortunate souls of the little village. Now,

through our personal experience we had learned the depth of their suffering. Our host's household had about forty members. Each one of them, even the servants, had had an immersion into the pain of complete famine. My mother said to me, 'Now that you have grasped the logic of our present state, pray to God to unlock the mystery of it.' Moreover, the whole village underwent half a day of grim praying. I knew then the mystery: 'All creation is the result of God's pain-joy. It is pain and joy at the same time.'

"Then came the miracle. The people from the next village sent back the barge full of rice.

"This is the mystery of pain. If another person, whom you know, suffers, try to experience his suffering. If you do so, God descends upon you as upon him. How can I explain this strange truth to you? Our ignorant unlettered mother had successfully brought to pass the consummation of the divine mystery. When the people through penance had found spiritual abundance, the material abundance was added to them. That was all."

Mr. Eagles and I looked at each other. Did he understand? Could I myself grasp what we had heard?

A couple of days later my sister resumed her story at the same hour on the palisade. "Gesture, posture, and walk," we were told, "were most important in a woman's education. She must walk with the dignity of an elephant."

"Dignity of an elephant!" exclaimed our American brother.

"Softly as an elephant and gracefully as a gazelle, if you prefer," my sister said with a smile. "Serving

food must be done with art—palm raised thus, and body held thus: very much like the goddess Annapura or Mother of All."

"How beautiful!" exclaimed Mr. Eagles.

"Next to gesture, the most difficult training was in memorising and reciting the scriptures, the poems, and the dramas. Whenever an accent or movement missed its effect, Mother used to murmur, 'Alakshana.' That was enough to freeze one's aspirations. What did it mean? Alakshana is bad marksmanship, hence ill-omen.

"Thus we learned all the arts. To them were added reading, writing, and calculation which were easy, for there was no discipline of body or emotion involved in the process. Then came the last lessons before I was married. You know the first ceremony which we call marriage is really only a betrothal, though binding for all time. The lessons about love and marriage were very severe. I had to meditate on woman's pain, the source of soul-creation. I had to think of love as a result and not the cause of my marriage.

"Though the visiting missionaries used to tell me of love before marriage I was careful enough to pay no attention to such unexamined assertions. I held to my mother's sentence: 'True love is the result of marriage.' I have taught my daughters the same thing, for my own life has verified it. My Lord, who awaits me in the House yonder [1] was the happiest and the truest of men. As my brothers say, 'Our sister did not leave us. She went forth to bring us a new brother.' My mother-in-law used to say that her son had brought her one who

[1] Eternity.

seemed to have sprung from her own womb and to have been trained with her own hands. How was this possible? Because I held to my mother's command: 'True love is the child of true marriage.' It was my task to make this marriage true."

"You have amply succeeded, sister," I testified. "You have also shown us the art of being a widow."

"Indeed," she remarked, "it is more difficult than marriage and love."

"I hope I can learn more of your marriage: first, the absolute betrothal; and second, the wedding," begged Mr. Eagles.

To this her answer was prompt. "I shall tell what I remember. . . . When I was twelve——"

"Twelve," I interrupted, "in tropical India is the equivalent age of a girl of sixteen in Boston."

My sister went on without noticing what I had said. "I was pleased to learn that an eligible youth of eighteen had been found for me to marry. Gladness seized my heart. I could not realize that at last what I had been taught to believe was about to happen. So marriage was not a fairy tale, but was to become the reality of my experience! I was in bliss for days to come.

"Then one day I saw him. He had come to our neighbor's, ostensibly to pay them a visit. I, who had been invited to meet a girl friend of mine there, learned after seeing him exactly who he was. I was touched, and how embarrassed I felt! Suddenly pain seized me. Not the common unrest of a day's fleeting pain, but the pain of mystery. So I went to our mother and

buried my face in her lap. Slowly and solemnly she gave me the symbol—her last lesson. It is said that God is born on earth without a human father, but he can not be born without a mother. Shri Krishna was the son of such a mother. So was Buddha Deva. Their mothers were virgins. Our mother told me the truth. Now I was ready for him who was to be my husband. I was to bear him human children. In him and in me dwelt the other—the divine child."

Again my friend and I looked at each other. Mr. Eagles surmised the symbolism of our mother's teaching.

"Then the day dawned," resumed my sister, "when I was betrothed. I had to fast. So did he. The family priests and the family genealogists explained and counter-explained our respective heredities. Then we were pronounced betrothed forever. We swore by the fire, by the earth, by the heavens, by our parents, and last of all by the very living God to fulfill each other by uniting our souls to the soul of God Himself.

"After that three years passed during which time my husband came to see me twice a week. We talked and laughed, and spent hours in planning our future. Thus we became used to each other. Occasionally I went to his house and learned to obey his parents. But we two saw each other as if we were friends.

"Then came the last ceremony at the end of the thirty-four months. I went to his house where my family left me, and then he took me to the roof of our home and showed me the evening star. Then pointing higher, he showed another heavenly body. Still higher

he pointed. Now I perceived the lodestar. 'May we be steadfast and above the world as the shining one yonder.' Thus we pronounced our pledge. 'May God keep us fixed to our roots.'

"Now I am past fifty. He has been in the upper universe over nine years. But the lodestar shines. I have brought up his children and grandchildren. Life has his laughter. I rejoice with the living. But yonder he awaits me, for I am his soul's leader. Without me he can not embrace God. That is all that my unlettered mother prepared me for. Whether her training was good, my grandchildren's life will testify, for they say the wisdom of a trainer only attains full growth in the great-grandchildren."

Another day Mr. Eagles asked her if life was not often very lonely for her.

"All life at all ages is a vigil of loneliness," my sister answered. "Human companionship can not end that loneliness. It only ends with finding our witness dwelling within us—Nanya pantha—no other path."

"You make life hard, if not painful," Mr. Eagles remarked.

After pondering a while, our Brahmin widow replied, "We do not expect life not to be hard, and we build resistance in our young very early. From the beginning no one suffers from self-pity. If you are indifferent to your own suffering you can resist life's tricks to the very end. The witness within is unattached. Find Him; then you too will be free. Freed at last, you will be able to serve and succor others in pain. Our freedom from our small selves makes us more useful to those

who need us. Alas, words cannot convey what I am trying to say to you. Let us meditate and listen to one another's silence. Nanya pantha—there is no other way."

"Can you have any objection to the remarriage of widows?" asked Mr. Eagles.

After a slight pause my sister responded, "No. Many Brahmin and other widows are remarrying now, and the number is increasing from year to year everywhere. Widows can eat mutton or fish, if they wish. The majority of the Hindus, as you know, do not eat any meat or fish, but gradually that custom is going. Young widows nowadays are permitted to eat everything. Besides, the majority of them do not fast every fortnight for twenty-four hours as they used to do. But, as you know, the rigors that we have borne have only been imposed upon women of the two upper castes."

"I did not know that," Mr. Eagles said.

My sister resumed her story. "Even suttee was confined to the upper castes and then only in some provinces; in the greater part of India the Hindu people refrained from the custom. About a hundred years ago even the upper classes in these few provinces abandoned the practice. Similarly only in the upper classes has the rigorous social life of the widows been kept up. Now that they are abandoning this also, they will resemble the other classes who have nothing to give up."

Here I obtruded a question of my own. "But what about you? Do you like this discipline of not wearing ornaments, fasting once a fortnight, eating strict vegetarian food, and serving others all the time?"

My sister answered without hesitation, "I do, and I find the discipline most useful. Without it you cannot keep up your spiritual practices. It is a pity that most people have not experienced the need of the disciplines. I find that without them I would not have made any spiritual progress at all. The body has to be stilled, otherwise the soul would not speak. By letting go of the creature comforts, we silence the body. The younger generation is being brought up differently. I have no objection, and my own daughter I have brought up in the new way because her life belongs to another world beset with other problems than those I had to face." [1]

[1] See Brihad Aranyaka Upanished 4th Chapter 5th Brahman. Also Consult Manu Sinriti on Marriage. According to this Book "marriage brings together two instruments tuned to perfection by the Hand of God."

CHAPTER XXX

WE VISIT OUR ANCESTRAL VILLAGE

IT was the wish of Mr. Eagles that before going to the Mt. Everest region we should visit the country in order to get a glimpse of the people's life there.

Therefore from my sister's presence in Calcutta we went to our village where one hundred and fifty years ago our family lived, and this, like any other village has a distinct character of its own. Families have lived there sometimes as long as 700 years without moving. It had a distinct character—spiritual and material.

Like all villages, ours of Darapore was on the bank of the river at one end and on the edge of a miniature lake at the other. From this lake came the drinking water of the village. In the river all the washing of the village was done—men, animals, and clothes.

When we arrived there, it was the middle of the afternoon. The village had begun to stir after its midday rest. Cowherds, we noticed, were disappearing in the distant pasture with their cattle. Plowmen were working in the fields to get them ready for the spring sowing, for in India spring comes in the latter part of February. Women were going to the lake bearing beautiful pitchers to fill with drinking water. As has often been said, they walked with the grace of statues.

After we had made ourselves comfortable in the

house of a friend, Mr. Eagles and I went to see our ancestral home which has been falling to decay for a hundred years. In these villages of India people entertain strange sentiments. For instance, the spot of ground on which our dilapidated building stood had never been cleared by another structure, because people believed that seven hundred years left a building so powerful that even after the house was destroyed the spiritual reality remained, and they would never rebuild until the roof of the old house had completely collapsed. If the walls have no roof, the proverb went, "the spirit has left, and we can build again."

"In India continuity seems to have a stronger hold than anywhere else," Mr. Eagles observed. "Here change is illusion, and continuity is real; while with us in America, change is reality and continuity an apparition."

I wandered about with him showing him the communal threshing floor where all the village meetings were held, the temple where the village worship went on, and the little school where children were taught to read and write.

On the outer porch of the temple I introduced him to the priest. The American asked whether the priest was a holy man.

The latter immediately replied, "No. How can I be holy like a monk when I have to carry on the rituals of an entire village? The routine of service robs me of the leisure to become a completely ripened holy one."

Mr. Eagles plied him with many questions concerning birth, marriage, and death. To the first, the man of God answered, "Souls are born into the world because of what they have experienced in a previous incarnation. Those who die doing good and are reborn into spiritually enlightened families thus receive their desert."

"I should think this would result in fatalism," said Mr. Eagles.

The priest smiled, "If a man understood Karma, he would never become a fatalist. If, by the good deeds of your last incarnation, you are reborn into a better environment, you should use your present incarnation as an opportunity to become more spiritual. Similarly, if you die doing evil, you are bound to be reborn in a materialistic community, for there is no greater evil than materialism. But there again, you can work and better yourself so that in your next life, instead of being born in the house of human parents, you will be translated to a higher sphere."

Mr. Eagles was not quite satisfied. "Isn't there any fatalism in India?" he asked.

The man of God answered, "Yes. In this village there are many souls who do not stir at all. They do their daily deeds, perform their usual rituals, and then say to me that they are going to Heaven. They indeed are fatalists for they misunderstand Karma." Now he put a question: "Can you tell me if there are fatalists in your country?"

Mr. Eagles pondered a while and turned to me say-

ing, "You ought to know. You have been there a long time."

Finding myself at a loss for an answer, I turned to the priest. "My lord, it is the habit of all life to answer one question by asking another. But you would better forego your turn and answer him for he is a very influential man in his community and if you tell him the true state of affairs in this village, he will spread it broadcast over there where houses are so tall that they almost touch the stars."

The priest answered, "Oh, I know all about that country. We see shadow pictures here. The houses are tall and people all shoot each other."

I said to him, "Why is it that throughout India the impression is that Americans live in tall houses and shoot each other?"

"It is because the shadow pictures (movies) portray nothing but that," said the priest.

"When I reach home, I am going to tell people not to send so many bad pictures to India," asserted Mr. Eagles. "Why can't we send decent ones that will give people the idea that America is a country of moral men and women! No good has come of these movies anyway!"

When the priest had to leave us to perform his duties in the temple, I took Mr. Eagles back to the house of our hosts.

In this house there were three people: the mother, her son, the village doctor, a graduate of Calcutta Medical College, and his wife. If twenty years ago they had entertained a meat-eater, whether Hindu or Chris-

tian, they would have been ejected from their caste. But such is the state of progress in India that now nobody complained because this roof sheltered Mr. Eagles and myself.

The son of the house was a doctor who had learned his science in a medical college in Calcutta maintained by public taxation. Darapore as a village had acquired the fame of being a health resort, so many people came there to be treated by one of its few doctors. My friend was the most prominent one there. That afternoon after we had had our tea, he took us for a walk and pointed out many things to us. "Do you see those two unveiled ladies coming?" he said. "They are my patients. Five years ago they would have veiled their faces while they took their afternoon walk, but now they don't."

"But those are Mohammedan ladies!" said I. "The Mohammedans observe stricter veiling than we Hindus do. It surprises me very much."

My friend answered, "We owe it all to Amanullah, the Ameer of Afghanistan."

Mr. Eagles and I exclaimed in unison.

The doctor continued, "You know that Mohammedans seclude their women strictly. It is to their conquest of India that we Hindus owe the custom of secluding our women. Now the unveiling of the women in Afghanistan by the Ameer has galvanized even the most narrow-minded Mohammedan family here. Mohammedan society is being reformed so rapidly that it is difficult to believe that we are not living in an age of fairy tales.

"What about the Hindus here?" Mr. Eagles asked.

The doctor replied, "You see the lake there where the women are gossiping and talking as the men go by. No one veils her face. Hindu women have been more or less free in spite of the Mohammedan conquest. And since Gandhi began his crusade against the caste system and the seclusion of women, these customs are vanishing very rapidly. In our village Pariahs worship in the same temple as we do and we drink water and receive uncooked food from all castes now. There has been one inter-caste marriage here, and I expect to see a good many more."

Mr. Eagles asked again, "But what will happen to the old India?"

The doctor reproved him, "Well, think of Sanskrit, for instance. What does it mean? Once India chanted Sanskrit hymns. Then about 400 B.C. she gave it all up for Pali, in which Buddha taught his message. India built her society on equality at that time. She wanted no more idolatry, no symbolism, but plain, austere, moral life. This she retained for nearly six hundred years. When Buddhism declined, Pali, as a spoken language, disappeared; again the Sanskrit of the Vedas was brought into use. All through India the caste system was revived. Soon it congealed into the forms that you still see today. With the Mohammedan conquest which commenced in the 11th century, purdah, and the seclusion of women, came. Not only that, but in some parts of North India at the time the burning of widows became a common practice among the higher castes.

"Then came again another change. In the 18th century the Portuguese Christians invaded India. By the

19th century India was speaking no more Sanskrit, but many provincial languages derived from the former. One of them is world famous—Bengali—the language in which Tagore writes.

"Out of 300,000,000 people, over 200,000,000 speak Hindustani, which is soon going to become the state language for all India. It is our common tongue now. Whenever we travel from province to province, and where our own provincial dialect is not understood, we make our needs known by using Hindustani.

"Our social order too is changing; the caste system is dying. There will be none in twenty years' time. Seclusion of women will be a thing of the past here in a decade, as it has become a thing of the past in Turkey. And yet the spirit of India will live beyond these changes. It will create new forms, a new society, and a new art. A new civilization based on our past is rising in our midst."

"I asked you for a simple statement and here you regale me with dithyrambics," Mr. Eagles remarked shrewdly.

Now that the dusk was falling we stood still and watched the herdsmen return to the village from the pasture. The cows lowed. The dust from their hoofs tinged the Heavens with saffron, and all around insect voices smote the air. We heard the priest's conch shell blow from the temple.

"It is the hour for silence," the doctor said. "Let us go to the temple."

Despite the cold weather, we sat on the outer porch because meat-eaters are not yet permitted to enter the

inner sanctuary in most of the village temples of India. Many villagers, mostly women, climbed the stairs, lighted candles, and left them in the inner shrine. Peace pervaded the atmosphere around us.

After half an hour, when the temple noises began for the purpose of winding up the ceremonies, we went home.

"Isn't it beautiful—the beating of gongs and waving of lights, that mark the finale of even-song in a Hindu temple?" asked Mr. Eagles.

"Yes, no doubt," answered the doctor. Then abruptly changing the subject, he resumed his discussion on the freeing of Indian women from purdah.

"Last year you were not permitted to study a Mohammedan lady patient beyond examining her pulse. Now she allows you to listen to her heart and the action of the lungs. This latest manifestation has proved conclusively to me that seclusion of women is a thing of the past both amongst the Hindus and the Moslems."

"See here, doctor," demanded Mr. Eagles, "how much truth is there in the assertion that too many girls die here in child-bed and that it is due to the adherence to the old type of mid-wife? But I am afraid I put my question rather abruptly," he apologized.

"Oh, that does not matter." And the doctor, evidently familiar with the accusation, launched forth readily into a harangue. "First of all you will find less mortality in child-bed in the old agricultural regions like this one, which are untroubled by malarial fevers, than in the factory-ridden districts. Here most people work out of doors. All the people lead normal lives.

Parenthood among the masses comes at a proper time and place. Though there is but one Western-trained doctor to about nine thousand people here, our death rate is much less than in the industrialized Calcutta and its vicinity where practitioners of Western medicine are numerous. In Darapore where we are, no chronic disease has undermined our women's health, they bring a healthy body to the task of motherhood. No wonder death does not take a high toll of their lives."

"But what about the mid-wives?" I asked.

"Well, there again, you have a simple matter much complicated by talk," the doctor explained. "There are really many good mid-wives. They have inherited sound ancient practices from the past. In the country, the mid-wives are well known and are well trained. They are human, not wizards. They are known to all the people in the village. A mid-wife, because she is known, is bound to keep up to a certain standard. She has to be efficient within the limits of her science. If she is not, and if she loses too many patients in child-bed, she will be expelled from her village. Necessity makes her efficient in preserving life. No doubt women do sometimes die in child-bed, but so they do under the care of doctors."

"Where then do the bad mid-wives come from?" asked Mr. Eagles.

"They are the unexamined, and unwatched mid-wives of the cities. In large cities and factory districts any fool may call herself a mid-wife, and can be accepted as such by the busy populace. The latter never

keep watch over them. If their ignorance of their art causes many deaths, they can go on indefinitely by simply plying their trade in new wards where they are unknown. There is no common knowledge, nor common criticism to fix a standard for a mid-wife. City people have no time to investigate her. Besides, the life that is led in cities and their neighborhood is so full of ill-health to start with that women bring no resistance to the grim task of motherhood.

"Don't blame everything on mid-wives and the superstitions of the people. Our mid-wives know a good deal. Instead of attacking them, if we were to put at their disposal the latest discoveries of modern science, we would supplement and strengthen a fine old institution. This would be much easier than creating a brand new school of doctors and trained nurses. For instance, the three mid-wives that live in Darapore have revealed to me an immense body of practical knowledge. I in turn have shown them what science has done since the eighteenth century. See the result—our village needs no trained nurse of the new school imported from abroad. The trouble with our Western rulers is that they want to import everything to us from far off places. Being a race of exporters they naturally see things in that way. But what India needs is redirecting, and supplementing the good things of her own past. It is so hard to explain all this.

"Take for another instance the usual superstition about the impending state of child-birth. I hear it said that the would-be mother is considered filthy and possessed by strange powers, hence she is put in an outer

hut by her family. . . . I have been to a good many of these huts to bring children into the world. They are clean according to the means of the family. If the people are poor, the hut is bound to be unclean. If they have means, the birth-room is immaculate and decorated with flowers."

"As a priest," said I, "I can add to your testimony something that redounds to the glory of the birth-hut. It is the spiritual atmosphere of the place and its symbolism."

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. Eagles and the doctor at the same time.

"Don't you know, doctor," I began, "that those rooms or huts are considered spiritual centers into which the earth-bound soul is preceded by God? So, after sweeping and washing the birth-room, it is at once cleansed, "pariskrita," by prayers. Then incense and frankincense—Dhoopodhoona—are burnt in every one of its corners. When the fumigation is finished beautiful flowers are arranged in two of its four corners by the family priest. Then he and the mother and the mother-in-law of the prasooti, the woman with child, meditate. When their joint meditation is over, the priest calls the gods and angels to forge a path of pearl from God's throne to the heart of that hut, so that at birth the essence of the Divine may be present to greet the soul of the new-born.

"Why do you think the child cries at its entrance to life? Because, the people say, at the moment of birth it recognizes the presence of its friend, God. The first moment of his sojourn on earth the child sees God and

gives out a cry of joy. Now the story goes that God remains in that hut guarded by gods and angels until the babe has his first nap. Like the waters of Lethe, the first slumber robs the child of its memory of God and Heaven. Then the Divine's essence leaves that room and returns to the House of Song. . . . You can now understand what the priest does in that hut before you doctors are called in. He brings the Eternal down to earth in order to couzen a soul into giving up its celestial habitat for a life on earth. God is the trap with which the new-born is caught. And if He fails to descend, the child will die, its little soul finding the earth too alien for a home. You see if the child dies, it is because the priest has failed to bring down the Lord, its Friend, ahead of its coming.

"But the wizardry of the Brahmin's prayers generally succeeds. The Almighty is present to greet the child until it falls asleep. Oh, that first sleep—it costs us our memory of Heaven."

"True," interrupted Mr. Eagles. "All our Western doctors now preach the need of a quiet and calm mental state in the face of an ordeal of this kind, though I have never noticed that they have as potent means by which to induce this desired condition in the hospital."

"Therefore," went on the doctor, "instead of proclaiming that all these birth-rooms are dens of filth, I would advocate the hut as an ancient institution. It is really a primitive type of maternity ward. Instead of destroying it let us strengthen it by putting modern

science into it. Let us say to ignorant people, 'Don't attack what you don't understand.' "

* * * * * * *

In the evening after our dinner at the house, the doctor went to work in his laboratory, while I escorted Mr. Eagles and the two ladies of the household to the village temple where the reading from the ancient scriptures had begun. Mr. Eagles now plied the doctor's mother and wife with questions, despite the enchantment of the night.

The moonlight was so intense that you could almost feel it drip like water on grass and moss. The shadows of palms and mangoes were like black marble cut with chisels. Between their varying shapes of jet flowed the glory of Chandrama, the moon. But Mr. Eagles paid no attention to the enchantment about us. He was asking, "Why do so many movements for advancement *fail* in India?"

The elder of the two ladies made reply thus, "When I was a girl, which seems in another incarnation, the spiritual and intellectual men believed in finding God. They also held, as a plowman to the plow, that in the process of reincarnation all souls will find Truth. Since knowledge can be appreciated only by the few advanced souls, they taught only a few persons. The latter were expected to teach a few worthy ones in their turn. But all that was upset by Vivekananda, for he held that truth could be taught to the multitude. About twenty-nine years ago, all India shook at the drumming

of Vedanta, 'Vedanta dindim,' by the Swami Vivekananda."

"I knew him in America," ejaculated Mr. Eagles. "A true Sannyasin."

The old lady corrected him, "A great Sannyasin. He was the forerunner of Mahatma Gandhi. But since his history is well known in America, I shall tell you a little of his work in India. That Vedanta Kashari, the lion of Vedanta, proclaimed that India can renew herself only by going back into the best of her past, and by being honestly proud of her own culture. We must love India no matter how foreigners revile her. Only by awakening the masses who have not lost their ancient Sanskrit culture can our race be saved from the barbarism of Europe. The millions who have not learned to read and write books have kept their souls and minds completely Indian.

"These ideas of Vivekananda quickened the masses and the classes. I recall now how suddenly hundreds of intellectual Indians who had learned from Western Christian writers to despise their own, suddenly turned around and brayed their pride in their heathen past."

"But you say that the masses have the ancient Sanskrit. How can this be true when I know they can't read and understand Sanskrit books?" protested Mr. Eagles.

Now that we had reached the temple, the discussion of cultures and Vivekananda stopped. There were two priests—one reading aloud the Gita and the other explaining it to the assembled multitude of the village. With the exception of a very few adults, infants of tender age, and young mothers, the whole village was

there. We had arrived just when the invocation was coming to its end: "Yasyantam na vidoo surarsuragana devaya tasmai namaha—Whose limits the immortals cannot reach; whose extent the Titans fail to measure; Him we salute!" A pause followed. Even the breathing of the people stopped for a while it seemed. Now they bent low like mown grass and bowed to the Infinite.

After they had all sat erect, the first priest shut the book in front of him, and blew out the candle that was burning near by. This meant that he was going to recite from memory. While he was preparing to begin, his assistant, the second priest, chanted, "May our prayers go to Him like kine to the cowshed at dusk."

With eyes shut, spine held erect, the first priest began: "God, man's infinite self (Narayana)—our other visage—is speaking to Nara, our finite self. 'Rasha aham apsu Kaunteya.' "

The second priest kept on translating from the Sanskrit into Bengali. "I, God, manifest myself in each thing as its supreme quality. In water I am its taste, behind the sun, its light; in man his humanity, and the silence of the endless sky."

Lines like the following came rolling in, "Vijam mam sarva bhutanam! mayi sarvamidam protam sutray maniganaiva."

After the Sanskrit, the translation flew like a shadow with the light. "I am the seed eternal blossoming in all beings. The worlds hang on Me like pearls on a string: I am the golden thread of continuity," the translator elaborated his meaning. "In the mineral I

am its glitter, in the plant its grace, in the animals their agility, in man I am his mind, and beyond man—God's ultimate speechlessness which no utterance can hide. Maunam chaibasmi guhyanam: I am the secret of secrets; I am Silence—behind the clamor of all realities."

While the Sanskrit smote the air like trumpet and bells, the moonlight revealed on the faces of the villagers such expressions of serenity that I felt my very observation of them an outrage. Hence, like my friend, Mr. Eagles, I shut my eyes and listened to the lion-roar of the Gita. . . . At last it was over. But the feelings aroused in me were so rich that I asked in my soul, "Sanskrit, canst thou be a language when I hear the very tread of God in thy rhythm!"

Now we bowed in salutation as the blessings were pronounced: "You come every evening, O assembled civilized folk, for amusement. Is there any other thing more amusing than the Song of God?

Shoovam astu	Good goes to all . . .
Shanti	Peace . . .
Shoovam astu	With you Good goes to All."

The next day Mr. Eagles said to me at breakfast before the entire household: "Now I know why your master said, 'Don't industrialize India, Sanskritize her.' Last night when I heard those words whose meaning I partly grasped, my ear could tell by the measure and the rhythm that the nation that hears it is bound to have a deep culture. I could feel the people's intense concentration. A complete purging of the soul of all

dross took place in them. They yielded themselves up body, heart, and soul to the recitation."

I answered, "Such indeed is India! If my old 'Guru' could hear you now."

"So say I about mine," rejoined Mr. Eagles. "If Whitney of Yale could have been here last night!"

"Whitney?" asked the old lady all agog.

"Yes! He taught me 'Deva vasa,' your language of the gods, in an American university."

"Then indeed you are blessed," exclaimed the doctor's mother. "Vivekananda used to say that Whitney and Max Muller were Rishis, Hindu sages, reborn in the present age." Now she commanded her daughter-in-law, "O thou helpless fawn, give more toast to 'Meester Yeegles'; he deserves it. What can I do to whet your palate, O enlightened one?"

Mr. Eagles wanted no half-burnt toast. But politeness being a man's friendly enemy, he devoured the blackest of it exclaiming, "Amrit, amrit—ambrosia, ambrosia!"

We spent almost all of the morning studying the life of the village toilers. In the main thoroughfare of our township, a row of weavers were holding up traffic by spreading the warp of a vast garment yet to be woven.

"What are they doing?" asked Mr. Eagles.

The hoary-headed craftmaster answered, "We are setting the warp. We shall roll it up—all except a few yards which will be embroidered by our wives and daughters. They own the secret of all the dyes. It is our custom to teach dyeing to our female children. And

since women are secretive, the witchery of our dyes is never betrayed.

"We shall take the warp to my house whither will come all the weaver-women to do their embroidering. It is great fortune to receive an order for so large a piece. Who ordered it? The Nawab for his son's wedding."

After passing the weavers we went to the blacksmith's smithy. Strange though it may sound, on examining it Mr. Eagles exclaimed, "Upon my soul, it looks like a smithy in any New England village—the same anvil, the same hammer, almost the same forge. Yes, but here is a difference, the smith is singing: Our American blacksmiths do so no more."

The song, translated, was something like this:

"Hammer and anvil
Tongue and palate,
Speak, speak, speak.
Tongue and palate,
What a din!
Hammer and anvil,
Sing, sing, sing!"

Then we came to the bazaar. Men and women in red, green, and blue dresses were bargaining about "jewelled fishes," "flame-coated oranges," "moon-shaming grains of rice," and "egg-plants whose skins are smoother than a maiden's cheek." And to crown all, a vendor was selling a basket full of wizened and wrinkled potatoes shouting, "They are dimpled and rounded as an infant's belly."

After sauntering by the potter's, the cobbler's, and

the street-sweeper's, we reached the open fields where men and women were working. There a chorus of singers poured upon us the ballads of the middle ages. Meadow after meadow were under the plough drawn by oxen. But there was not an acre of brown soil into which songs were not poured like water.

Before we knew it, it was eleven o'clock. The herds of cattle were driven in. The oxen were unyoked; men, women, and beasts went home for luncheon and a two hours' rest. But since rest is not for all, the bazaar kept up its buying and selling, though with a diminished din. In the doctor's house patients needing free treatment were still waiting. The paying part of his clientele had come and gone during the early part of the morning. Now the poor were waiting for their turn. What a variety of illnesses they suffered from! One had boils as Job did. Another had rheumatism. A little girl of ten was suffering from eczema. She was hideous with it. A woman with child had been waiting an hour to be examined. Her husband sat beside her listening to all kinds of tales about the blessings of not being barren. Last of all, we espied a fakir sitting under the lime tree. He was smeared with ashes. His cunning eyes were red with opium-smoking. His long tousled hair and dirty ash-smeared beard were a sight for the gods.

"What is his complaint?" asked Mr. Eagles.

To flatter him I said to the fakir, "Holy one, this meat-eater is a friend of mine. He wishes to know the nature of your illness."

The sly dog replied, "Is he an English doctor? How long is his purse-string?"

"If you belch out God's truth, holy one, his purse will open its mouth widely," I reassured him.

The fakir embraced my suggestion, "I earn my living by sitting on a bed of nails in Kashi, Benares. The other day I did not rub myself carefully with the proper kind of oil. The result was that I was scratched by a rusty nail. It pains me exceedingly. I came to the country to recover from nail-poisoning. Tell your friend I speak truth."

When Greek meets Greek it is fair fun. Mr. Eagles, now that he had met a business man, drove a good bargain. "I will give you one dollar which is three Indian rupees if you will tell me more of your trade."

The fakir agreed. "I sit on a bed of nails two hours a day in Kashi. Some people who are generally afraid of pain consider me holy and make offerings to me. I make ten rupees (about three dollars) a day. Harken, the doctor calleth to examine me. Give me my reward. Hasten!"

After clutching Mr. Eagles' dollar he fled towards the doctor's inner office.

About two in the afternoon, when my ancestral village was stirring itself in order to go back to work after the noonday siesta, Mr. Eagles and I said farewell to the doctor's family and set out for Darjeeling and the Mt. Everest country. I must confess that for the first time in India I felt despondent. A deep sense of sadness seized me now that we were going away. It was inexplicable.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE HIMALAYAS AT DAWN

AT two in the morning Mr. Eagles and I left our beds in the hotel at Darjeeling and set out on ponies for Tiger Hill which affords the best view of a sunrise on the Everest and the Kunchinjungha.

It took us two hours' steady climb in the dark to reach the summit of Tiger Hill. When our ponies refused to go any further we concluded that we were on the edge of a precipice. Before us lay the chasms that separate India from the base of the Kunchinjungha range.

The darkness about us seemed to bristle like a panther's back every time our mounts changed their position. Stillness stood like rocks everywhere.

After what appeared to be an infinite time of waiting in corpse-like cold and silence our ponies, in order to hear better, moved their ears—once, twice, once again. Having focused their hearing they listened intently. We too listened. A mere wisp of sound like the soft opening and shutting of a silk fan came towards us from the farthest distance. . . . It was daybreak! Star after star paled and set. Clusters of them folded their wings and slipped out of sight. Now a shiver of sound like that of humming bird's wings rose in the

air: two hawks were flying in circles over our heads. A point almost at the middle of the heavens before us shone like a vermilion star. It was the Everest peak!

Soon what was but a star had become a large ruby lotus. Peak after peak of the Everest and the Kunchinjungha opened their petals to the sky. Now the light brimmed over the mountains. We followed its course till it poured upon the clouds of fog and mist at our feet, beyond whose farthest bank flew the two hawks —their wings all garnet, dripping with amber fire.

At last rose the sun, slowly and quietly in the southeast. That very moment we heard some one chanting from behind us. It was a Thibetan Lama. We looked at him carefully, as he chanted—Mani padme hum—salutation to the Jewel in the Lotus—oblivious of us and the rest of the world. Jumping from my pony I went towards him, for in his face I could discern the features of an old friend. My doubts were put to rest when the ancient fellow opened his eyes. I spoke to him, "My Lord, give me your blessing. Do you recognize me?"

"Indeed, child, I shall bless thee," he said, and did so then and there.

After the ceremony was over I introduced Mr. Eagles to the Lama, thus: "A seeker from the West is this friend of mine. We came hither to witness the sunrise. And the gods in their kindness made your face rise before me also! May we go back to Darjeeling with you? Will you ride my pony?"

So I walked behind the two riders back to the city, gladness dancing in my heart. After proceeding for an

hour or so, we beheld the city of Darjeeling—Seat of the Thunder—in the sunlight. Its tea gardens spread out like rugs on which the houses knelt.

The Lama spoke to me in Hindustani: "Why not come to our abbey? If you can leave your hotel by two in the afternoon with your bedding rolls, you will reach the Lamaserai before dusk. Try! You know the way, my son. Persuade your friend to come. We have plenty of room for friendly pilgrims, always."

"Indeed, O Diadem of Understanding," I answered him, "we shall come."

In another quarter of an hour we reached the parting of the ways. Before the Lama took leave of us, Mr. Eagles and I thanked him again for his invitation.

The rest of our way home I explained to Mr. Eagles the nature of my friendship with the Thibetan holy man who had just left us.[1]

"Strange things happen in India," exclaimed Mr. Eagles.

I did not care to tell him that miraculous things take place to those few foreigners who are tuned to the inner life of India!

That day, after arranging for our baggage at the hotel, early in the afternoon we started for the Lamaserai.

Mr. Eagles was interested not so much in sunrises and sunsets which have their place in a traveler's diary, but in contacts with the people, and he wished to talk to the Lama because he was eager to see if he would be

[1] The reader will find a detailed description of it in "Gay-Neck, the Story of a Pigeon," published by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.

like Kim's Guru. Though Kipling's India is fast dying, people still believe that some of his characters may be found in India today.

We hastened our pace, the sunset and the cold air goaded us. Though we had descended about a thousand feet into a warmer climate, the night came on apace and the temperature dropped anew. Fortunately for us, in less than an hour we drew close to the Lamaserai. At last we reached the "serai" where my friend of the morning most generously offered us hospitality. He spoke to us very little while escorting us to our rooms, for this was the hour of prayer at the monastery.

We were shown into small cells cut out of the side of a hill, in front of which was a patch of grassy lawn railed off at the outer edges. By the light of the lantern, which the Lama bore, we found the carriers had placed on the straw mattresses of our cells the sleeping bags that we had sent on ahead.

When the hour of prayer had passed we were asked to come to the reception room to dine with the monks. After wandering about we reached the old hall of my boyhood illuminated by candlelight. I was glad to be in the familiar reception room. The Lama now vestured in the usual blue clothes of an abbot received us. He had grown old in these twenty years. Yet his almond-shaped eyes, high cheek-bones and excellent color made him look youthful in spite of it.

After a short prayer we sat down to supper. It consisted of lamb-stew, tea, lettuce, tea, curd, tea, sweetmeats, and tea.

With the exception of their leader's there was not a

face familiar to me among the monks. Men whom I had known had gone away to teach in China. About nine Lamas all told were assembled in the abbey at the present time to undergo training. Except our friend of the morning, all of them wore brown woolen coats. He alone wore a blue silk coat and a purplish birreta on his head, marking him out as a dignitary.

On examining our surroundings, we noticed that the reception-room was hung with the same medieval paintings of gods and Buddhas. The ceiling overhead too was painted. It was supported by pillars of ebony. On the floor lay thick, heavy Chinese rugs of great antiquity.

After supper was over all the monks save the master left the reception room. Now the abbot spoke in his fine Hindustani, addressing all his remarks to Mr. Eagles: "At last the West is returning home to the East." This I translated for Mr. Eagles.

Puzzled, yet eager to learn, my American friend asked, "What is the import of that, my Lord?"

But before going further the holy man started telling his rosary of turquoise beads. "It means," answered the master at length, still fingering his rosary, "It means that in the West you are coming to learn some of the truths that you abandoned centuries ago."

At this moment a young monk brought in and left with us three fire-boxes, each one filled with ashes which in turn were laden with burning charcoals, red as a demon's eye. Having been provided with something to warm our hands, the conversation flowed on without further interruption.

"What must the West learn from the East? What truths did we abandon?"

The Lama looked at Mr. Eagles carefully, and told a few more beads.

"A middle-aged man like you," began the Lama, "needs some form into which to cast himself in order that he may find out the right spiritual values. After finding them he will carry them through old age. A youth never looks far ahead to inquire into Life. Because he has had no experience, he has little background. But when a man reaches middle life, he has had enough experience on which to base the question, 'What is true living? Into what form should I cast the rest of my life?' Until a man climbs the peak of the middle years, he can not behold the ranges of life ahead, nor can he look back and summarize what heights he has already climbed.

"Here in the East a middle-aged man gives up his old ways for a while and starts visiting temples and monasteries. He associates with wise men and thinks of life's deeper meaning. Such is the form for people of your age to enter. After a few years when that question to which I referred is at least partly answered, you will go back to your old existence and live it in new terms for new purposes."

All this was far from easy to translate, so the master was asked to restate it. As before, without interrupting his bead-telling, he clarified the matter thus: "The first twenty-one years a man spends in studying and acquiring knowledge and strength. The next twenty-four years he spends in acquiring wealth, wife and progeny.

"Between forty-five and fifty-two, he is generally

faced with this question, 'Now that the children are grown, now that my wife and I begin to grow old, should I not find out what is worth while for the years to come? I should not go on as before. I must spend some years in a voyage of self-exploration.' Here in the East, we have had a form—a method of voyaging—which is considered desirable by all. Many middle-aged persons are encouraged to seek the meaning of life by pilgrimage. Some seek it in study. This is the Eastern form. What is its equivalent in the West now? In the past it had an accepted form we know."

After a pause, Mr. Eagles rejoined, "In medieval Europe it is true we did have a similar form. The very fact that Dante starts in middle life on a pilgrimage to hell and heaven shows that we too once had a form permitting middle-aged persons to go in search of the meaning of life. . . . At the present moment—yes, you are right—we *are* rather at loose ends. A man when he reaches my age is left to his own devices. Ah, I see now: you mean that we should look to the East in order to rediscover some of the forms of life that we have foolishly discarded?"

The Lama smiled and spoke no more that evening. But before we had said goodnight, he announced: "It has been our practice for centuries to pray for all who sleep. At this hour of the night we pray that Eternal Compassion may purify all, so that when men awake in the morning, they will begin their day with thoughts that are pure and kind. Will you meditate with us?"

We readily agreed. We sat praying for God's compassion for all mankind. Since that day I think always of those Buddhist monks in the Himalayas praying for

the cleansing of the thoughts of all men and women lost in complete sleep.

The next morning before sunrise, the abbot himself came to rouse us. He invited us to join his friends in prayer at a certain spot. When we were ready, he led us thither. The day broke soon. I found that we were sitting in a cleft of a mountain, and at our feet lay a precipice sheer and stark. The tinkling of silver bells rose softly in the sunlit air, bells upon bells, silver and golden, chimed gently and filled the space with their sweet music. What a greeting to the harbinger of light. . . . Now walked into sight the Kanchanjungha peaks. They had put on the sun-wrought sky for vestments.

After breakfast the Lama and Mr. Eagles resumed their conversation. Both of them talked and talked. And this went on all the time that we were there. Sometimes while they talked in a cell at night wild buffaloes would go grunting by not fifty yards away. Then in the daytime, we would wander through the jungle talking, and when we encountered wild animals the holy man of Thibet and the philanthropist of America ignored them.

Thus a week passed. Talking was not the only thing we did, however. We meditated too. Mr. Eagles and even I could sit in meditation for hours. Environment is stronger than man: The Lamaserai compelled us to do many things that the Lamas did.

In the meantime something tremendous was happening to Mr. Eagles. I could discern the change in the man's nature. I said to him one day, "Mr. Eagles, are you going too far?"

He answered, "I don't know; but this abbot makes me feel like a child. I am absolutely happy in his company. I seem to recall a previous existence, and I seem to know why I was born in America in this incarnation. Do you understand what I mean?"

"Don't you think it is time to return to your civilization and forget incarnation?" I said anxiously.

To this he replied, "I will ask the Lama. If he tells me to go back, I will, and if he does not, I will stay on here for a while at least."

These words worried me considerably. And I felt quite relieved the next week, when we had descended to the plains of Calcutta and bade farewell to my sister before starting westward for Benares. On the train Mr. Eagles told me the comment he had received in answer to his questions put to the Buddhist Abbot.

"Running away from the civilization of America," the Lama had said, "will not put right anything. If your soul chose to be born there, it must fulfill the obligations of its choice. Complete the West in this incarnation, so that in the next you may be born in the right country. Our religion has no escape to offer anybody. If there is one cult that helps you to evade the grim reality of living, you will not find it in India. With us life is an adventure, and more: it is a task. Would you wish the instrument of your use to turn in your hand? No! Your present incarnation is the instrument in the hand of your soul. Don't let it turn!"

I only said, "My dear sir, the Lama has evidently put you in the proper frame of mind for Benares, our holiest city."

CHAPTER XXXII

A SHORT SKETCH OF INDIAN HISTORY AND ITS RELIGIONS

BY the time we had said farewell to the Himalaya Mountains, it became quite clear to me that if Mr. Eagles was to appreciate the art and past of Benares, Agra, Delhi and Amritsar, he should have a summary of Indian history in his mind. It was necessary for myself as well to bear in mind the major epochs of our past.

If we take into account the latest discoveries in the lower valley of the Indus and in the upper part of the province of the Punjab, we have to concede that Indian antiquity goes as far back as 3600 B.C. The ancient town that has been dug up near the mouth of the Indus shows a civilization which resembles that of the Sumerians in Mesopotamia. Cuneiform writing, seals, gods, animals, men of different sizes, and the quality of art apart from houses and walls, go to show the similarity of the Indus Valley culture and the culture of the Euphrates Valley. Even images seated in Buddha posture have been unearthed to prove that that attitude of meditation is of a remoter antiquity than the Buddhist religion.

It would be safe to indulge in the theory that because of such a high civilization existing in India, bar-

barous races from further north across the Himalayas were drawn southwards. In order to rob, and to enrich themselves at the cost of the civilized India, one of these barbarous races, the Indo-Aryans, invaded India about 2000 B.C. They came south, attracted by the reports of the wealth of the ancient Indus civilization. About 1500 B.C. they settled all over northern India. Though they assimilated the art and architecture of the conquered civilization, they imposed upon it their own religious concepts. As they became refined by living with the older civilization and its religion, their social life took the forms, some of which have come down to our time.

It was between 1500 and 800 B.C. that the Aryan caste system was invented. It was also at this time that the Vedic hymns and other religious documents were completely composed. Slowly a perfectly crystallized culture was created. It is commonly known as the Vedic culture of the Aryans.

Let us examine one item of that culture: the Vedic hymns are of varying quality. One of them which has never been paid attention to is worth transcribing in its entirety but owing to lack of space, we can only have certain stanzas from it. It is the hymn to the human body in the Atharva Veda.

Book X Hymn 2

1. By whom were brought the two heels of a man? By whom was his flesh put together? By whom his two ankle-joints? By whom his cunning fingers? By whom his apertures? By whom his (two) "uchlakhas" in the midst?

2. From what, now, did they make a man's two ankle-joints below, his two knee-joints above? Separating his two back-thighs, where, forsooth, did they set them in? The two joints of the knees—who indeed understands that?
3. There is jointed fourfold, with closed ends, above the two knees, the pliant trunk; what the hips are, the thighs—who indeed produced that by which the body became very firm?
4. How many gods, which were they, who gathered the breast, the neck-bones of man? How many disposed the two teats? Who the two collar-bones? How many gathered the shoulder-bones? How many the ribs?
5. Who brought together his two arms, saying "he must perform heroism?" What god then set his two shoulders upon the body?
6. Who bored out the seven apertures in his head—these ears, these nostrils, these eyes, this mouth? In the might of whose conquest in many places quadrupeds (and) bipeds go their way?
7. In his jaws put his ample tongue, then attached (to it) the great voice? He rolls greatly on among existences, clothing himself in the waters: who indeed understands that?
8. Which was that god who (produced) his brain, his forehead, his hindhead? Who first his skull?
9. Numerous things dear and not dear, sleep, oppressions and wearinesses, delights and pleasures—from where does formidable man bring them?
10. Whence now in man (come) mishap, ruin, perdition, misery, accomplishment, success, non-failure? Whence thought, uprisings?
11. Who disposed in him waters, moving apart, much moving? Who produced blood river-running, strong ruddy red, dark and turbid, upward, downward, crosswise in man?
12. Who set form in him? Who both bulk and name? Who (set) in him progress? Who display? Who behaviors in man?
13. Who wove in him breath? Who expiration and respiration? What god attached conspiration to man here?

14. What one god set sacrifice in man here? Who (set) in him truth? Who untruth? Whence death? Whence the immortal?
15. Who put about him clothing? Who prepared his life-time? Who extended to him strength? Who prepared his swiftness?
16. Who put in him seed, saying, "let his line be extended"? Who conveyed into him wisdom? Who gave (him) music? Who dances?
17. With what did he cover this earth? With what did he surround the sky? By what is man a match for mountains in greatness? By what, for deeds?
18. The Brahmin God dwells upon the gods, the Brahman (upon) the people of the god-folk, the Brahman this other asterism; the Brahman is called a real authority.
19. By whom is this earth disposed? By whom the sky set above? By whom this atmosphere, the expanse, set aloft and across?
20. By the Brahman is the earth disposed; the Brahman (is) the sky set above, the Brahmin this atmosphere, the expense, set aloft and across.
21. The Divine sewed together his head, and also his heart.
22. Verily the head of man (is) a god-vessel. Breath defends it, the head, foot, and also the mind.
23. Was he now created upward? (Or) was he now created cross-wise? Did man grow unto all the quarters?—who knoweth the Brahmin's stronghold. from which man is thus called?
24. Whoever indeed knoweth the Brahmin's stronghold, covered with amrita, Ambrosia, unto him both the Brahman and the gods have given sight, breath, progeny.
25. Him verily sight doth not desert, nor breath, before old age, who knoweth the Brahmin's stronghold, after which man is named.
26. Eight-wheeled, nine-doored, is the impregnable stronghold of the gods; in that is a golden vessel, heaven-going, Covered with light—(the Soul of Man).[1]

[1] Prof. Ukil of Viswa Bharati's adaptation into English from the Sanskrit.

When we discovered this hymn, hitherto unknown, in the house of an Indian Sanskritist, Mr. Eagles and I were delighted. This was something that was a basis for a relation between modern thought and ancient Hindu culture. Incidentally, it gives the reader the quality of the Vedic culture which was neither too other-worldly nor too materialistic. It balanced Soul with Body perfectly.

By the time we reach 500 B.C., the Vedic Hindu society had hardened into a rigid caste system; ceremonials had taken the place of inspirational chants; and a general emphasis on the letter at the expense of the spirit had begun in religion and philosophy. All the same, the Upanishads which had formed a part of the Veda during all these years, and whose deep spiritual inspiration is a solace to millions of Hindus today, were left untouched by ritual and form. The tyranny of the caste had increased so that life was unbearable for the lower classes. Schools of philosophy, such as the famous Sankhya, probably the oldest system of philosophy in the world, had by now become intellectual diversions for the spiritually idle. The oppression of the lower classes by the higher, and the discrimination between the sexes had increased.

It was against such a social and spiritual order that Buddhism rose in revolt. Buddha, as the world knows, was the son of a king who, when he came to the knowledge of humanity's heritage of sorrow and death, gave up the throne, and in order to find the solution for the ills of mankind spent fourteen years in spiritual exercises. He renounced the world at twenty-eight and be-

came known as the great teacher Buddha at the age of forty-one. He died when he was eighty and his religious teachings were of such high value that they became the religion of India within three hundred years' time. But instead of Sanskrit in which the Veda had been written, from now on the common people's speech, Pali, became the language of Buddhism, because Buddha wished to be understood by the common people. This forms a strange parallel with the speech of Christ which was Aramaic, the folk language of his time.

The cardinal emphasis of Buddhism was abolition of caste, abolition of priest-craft, abolition of sex inequality, and a complete affirmation that every individual being can win his salvation through his own efforts. Again and again Buddha says: "Therefore, be lamps unto yourselves, and work out your salvation with diligence, singly, alone. Do not take to any external refuge."

Now we come to the most difficult subject of Buddhism: the definition of the word "Nirvana." According to most translators, Nirvana has been rendered as Nothingness. There is no doubt that that sort of translation is utterly misleading. Nirvana really means the blowing out of hate, avarice, and fear. When hate, avarice, and fear are blown out, what remains are the positive spiritual qualities such as peace, enlightenment, and truth. The content of experience symbolized by Nirvana, cannot be Nothingness. Again and again this has been emphasized by Oriental teachers in our scriptures. Nirvana is a negation of all the evils of the world and an *affirmation* of that peace in a human be-

ing's own soul which has been called the "peace that passeth all understanding."

Buddhism also, apart from bringing about social changes, brought about intellectual changes. It built great universities in India. One of them has recently been dug out under the city of Royal Pindi. At the time of Alexander the Great it was called Taxila. The university flourished even then. There were many where sciences were taught. Susroota, the Indian Hippocrates, wrote scientific treatises on medicine, which were taught in the then seats of learning.

His and Charaka's works have been considered of high significance by modern men of science. Along with surgery and surgical operations on men, Buddhistic India developed the study of veterinary sciences. They were in their knowledge of mental disease pioneers in creating some of the cures of insanity. For the healing of many nervous disorders, the Buddhists and the later Hindus of India invented "Hatha Yoga." Its effects have been most beneficial.

The Buddhists of India also set up the study of chemistry as testified in the "History of Hindu Chemistry," by Sir P. C. Roy. They knew metallurgy, also. Of this last, there is a steel column in Delhi as a specimen. This *rustless* column has been standing in rain and shine for nearly two thousand years and it has not collapsed yet. It testifies to the immense scientific knowledge augmented by Buddhism in India.

Then when Emperor Asoka made Buddhism the religion of all India, great works of art began to flourish.

Of these we had seen specimens in Karle, Ajanta, and Elura.

About the end of the second century of the Christian era, Buddhism began to decay, and in its place a rejuvenated Hindu religion was established. The chief exponent of this was Sankaracharya whose abbey Mr. Eagles and I visited in Nasik.

When Hinduism returned it was sometimes called Vedanta or the end of the Veda. Sometimes it has been called Brahminism because it brought back the caste system which is dominated by the Brahmins. With its coming began a new culture in India. As symbols of that culture we have the great epics; the Mahabhrata and the Ramayana. The great dramas such as Shukantala, the wonderful works of philosophy such as the six systems of Hindu philosophy and the immense bodies of astronomical writings are monuments of its power.

Then as a climax of mathematical work rose the decimal system, and the system of numerals which was later given to the West under the name of the Arabic system of numerals. Even algebraic problems were written in delightful Sanskrit poetry. Here is an example: "Of a swarm of bees one-fifth settled on a Kadamba flower and one-third on a Salindia blossom; one bee remained hovering in the air, attracted at the same time between the enticing perfume of a jasmine and of a pandma. Tell me, Charming One, the number of the bees!" These treatises also solved equations with more than one unknown quantity, as well as equations of a higher degree. In all of these respects Indian alge-

braists rise appreciably above the level attained by Deophantus, the Greek algebraist of Alexandria (250 A.D.)[1]

In the meantime titanic temples, palaces, and courts of kings were being built all over India. The Indian empire extended from the border of Persia to Burma, and from the Himalayas to Ceylon.

About 1100 A.D. began the Mohammedan invasion of India which culminated, artistically speaking, in the Mogul empire. Fatephur Sikri, built by Akbar, the Taj Mahal and other works of art by his grandson, Shahjehan, in northern India bear ample testimony to the culture of the Indian Mohammedans, a majority of whom were converted Hindus. Outside of India there is not any monument of Mohammedan culture that can hold its own against the architecture wrought by our Mohammedans. The Hindu blood and Mohammedan religion—the two combined, produced the magnificence of Mogul India.

After the assimilation of the Mohammedans the French and the British came to India. The French were driven out by the British. Of the present day Indian culture men like Gandhi and Tagore who are beginning to be known to the western world are specimens. What we have now is the beginning of a bridge between science and mysticism. That is yet to come. But

[1] See "India's Past," p. 191, Macdonell.
That the decimal system of notation was invented in India and given to mankind by the Hindus is above dispute. The second gift from India is the so-called Arabic numerals which superseded Roman forms of calculation. Lastly, algebra was much more highly developed in India than anywhere else. It is Indian algebra learned by the Arabs and augmented by them that forms the basis of our modern algebra.

this synthesis of Science and Mysticism will take place without any trouble; for to the Hindu mind a conflict between Science and Religion is inconceivable. Like that hymn in the Atharva Veda quoted already we have always held that Soul and Body are not enemies but two aspects of a single reality.

CHAPTER XXXIII

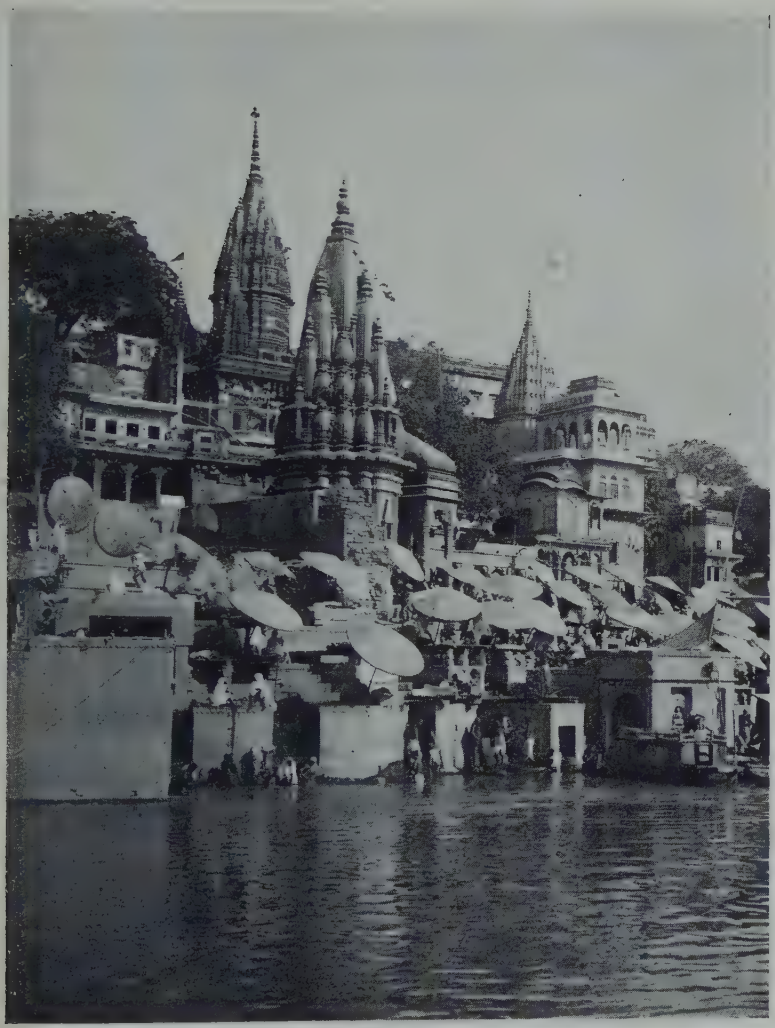
KASHI—BENARES

BENARES again! As we drove to the bridge from Sikral station, the city resting on the trident of Shiva, as legend has it, smote us with its awe and wonder. The cloud-burdened sky leaned on the turret of Beni Madhav's temple like a weary pilgrim on his staff. On the other side of Beni Madhav the stream of the Ganges forked and bent as the tusks of an elephant. On the shores of the two streams stood ghaut after ghaut of yellow sand-stone, and above them vermilion domes of shrines rose like battle-flags. Against walls of houses, white, violet, grey, and rose-red, thronged pilgrims in their mantles of purple, jade, and chrysoprase.

"What enchantment!" exclaimed Mr. Eagles.

As though it were a sacrilege to drive through so much beauty, he and I decided to march with the other pilgrims. After giving the hack-driver his direction and baksheesh we set out on foot.

Women, men, children, cows, and several stray elephants jostled one another on the dusty roads of holy Benares. Here was Dasaswamedha, The Stallions Ten, a ghaut, up whose steps came in serried ranks violet-clad ladies, and men in saffron, blue, and red. Thud, thud, thud of their feet marked the rhythm of pilgrim-



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Benares.

age. No more did we hear the whir and grind of wheels, nor the clangor of street-car bells.

"Bivo viswanath, O Lord, O master of the Universe," many people chanted as they passed.

"Pahi, pahi, protect, O protect us," prayed others going down to bathe in the river.

Now we came to Manikarnika—Gem of Gems—which opened up like a flower's petals. It seemed as though miles of granite terrace had suddenly burst their buds and blossomed into multitudinous colors and shapes.

"It is inconceivable," muttered my friend.

"Have you had enough for one day?" I asked.

"No, no," he answered, "Push on through this up to the monastery gate."

So thither we went by lanes clad in lavender shadows, temples with dark interiors all golden with candle-flames, and through spacious emerald gardens dedicated to the pilgrims' service and rest.

At last, our eyes aching with beauty, and minds stunned by wonder, we entered the Rama Krishna monastery gate. There, a little before noon we were received by the holy man who had succeeded my old master, now dead.

As we sat down in the presence of the new abbot, Kalika, who looked like a bank president, said to Mr. Eagles, "You have traveled far. Rest a while here. There is no haste in Benares. Here is lemon-juice for the pleasuring of your gullet. Drink, let the quest of God wait a while."

We were then shown to our rooms, and Mr. Eagles

lay down on his couch to rest. And rest he did, for he slept.

While he was sleeping I went out to see Kalika, his holiness. I was not wrong to call him a bank president. There in his little room of concrete walls and red cement floor, he was giving instruction to almost half a hundred men and women. The master had a straight nose, large eyes, and a haughty chin. His inner nature was expressed not by his face but by his hands which came in and out of his orange robe. As he spoke I scrutinized them. By their very shape, they indicated true holiness. I have never seen such lotus-like lines in any other pair of hands. Every gesture that he made with them seemed to bless and caress the minds of his listeners as if they blessed the heads of little children. In India it is said that "the mouth is a liar"; it is the "hand that bestows Truth." Kalika's hands could bestow nothing else, it seemed.

At one o'clock the crowd dispersed. The teacher said to me, "Let us dine with your friend here."

So I went back to our rooms and fetched Mr. Eagles. During the meal no one spoke much. We ate lentil soup, rice, curried potato, and sweetmeats. For drinking we were given orange juice. During the entire meal, the only words spoken I remember were the Sanskrit grace.

The master intoned: "Braharpanam. . . . Brahma karma samadhinam—This from the infinite, through the infinite in us, is offered to the infinite to fulfill His Infiniteness."

I remember after it was said Mr. Eagles exclaimed, "What a way of saying grace!"

We spent the rest of the day resting in our rooms. After nightfall we went into the city. It was most interesting to see in houses and shops that were still open the life of a completely unwesternized community. People were spending their time in discussion, in recitation of poetry, or in listening to music. In the night all the houses looked as old as the stones with which they had been made. Human beings seated by oil lamps or by the light of candles took on strange supernatural shapes. Whatever we looked at seemed symbolic, and more real than reality. In one place under the canopy of a temple, open to the four winds, against stone pillars sat young men around Homa, the sacrificial fire, reciting the Vedas. This was the first time Mr. Eagles had heard so many young men chanting Vedic hymns set to ancient music. At the moment they sang to the One God. The refrain ran——

"Kas-ma-i de-va-ya ha-vish-a vi-de-ma."

The even accent cut like diamonds, marking the rhythm of the chorus, returning again and again, "To what God shall we offer sacrifice today?" And the chief cantor in deep bass answered at the end of each stanza, "To the One God!"

Sometimes he went off into other hymns and embellished his intonations. But each time the chorus asked him, "Devaya Kasmai havisha videma—To what God shall we offer sacrifice today?" He answered, "Purusha evedam sarvam—All that we see and all that we do not see, is contained in One. To Him we offer sacrifice."

Every now and then they poured butter into the fire and then sandalwood. The chanting created such a

powerful effect that it seemed to shatter all difference between Mr. Eagles and the rest of us.

As an American regiment on hearing "La Marseillaise" becomes welded to the French people, so Mr. Eagles was bound up with the spirit of Benares by the Vedic chant.

I shall never forget the sight. Pillars of sandstone were lighted with the garnet flames of the sacrificial fire, and in that strangely lit world, orange-robed brown men intoned the worship of one God. After it was over Mr. Eagles and I silently wended our way back to the monastery.

The next morning, with the chief holy man, we went to bathe in the Ganges. The way in which Mr. Eagles was accepted as a part of India no matter where the holy man led us was extraordinary.

Cows pushed us from every side. Monkeys chattered at us leaping from roof to roof. Here and there scores of parakeets flew from tree to tree drawing green sails against the sky. With the risen sun we descended the yellow sandstone steps to the holy water of the river.

Another day we stood on the top of a ghaut and watched the people come out of the water. Their wet robes clung to them, making men and women look more beautiful than antique sculpture. The procession going down into the river was full of human beings whose clothes gave them indefinite long curves, but when they came out in that cold piercing morning, their wet clothes clinging to them, the lines became clear cut, and they moved against the heavy columns like statues of Greece and Rome suddenly come to life. Here one could

see a Roman senator and there a matron and a child. "The West reads of Roman and Greek art, but we of the East live it."

After we had performed our ablutions, we went into the bazaar to bring offerings. Under canopies of topaz and emerald, men and women were buying flowers and fruits for offerings to the Gods. Sometimes we would see against a lavender wall white-robed men in green cloaks and saffron turbans selling scarlet hibiscus. In another place there would be women in amethyst veils and white dresses selling marigolds and jasmine; across from them there was a big booth canopied with Persian rugs where strange pots filled with rose water were for sale.

Between lines of this description we three walked until we reached the temple of Vishwanath, the Lord of the Universe. There I said to the chief steward of the temple that Mr. Eagles could enter because he was a friend. A long discussion ensued; the old priest was obdurate. Then the miracle happened. Mr. Eagles said, "I am a friend of Vivekananda."

When the priest was reassured that Mr. Eagles had in truth known Vivekananda and was his friend, he was at last allowed to enter. What was the magic in this name, the reader may ask. In India they believe that Vivekananda was the St. Paul of modern Hinduism and any European or American who was a friend of his is welcome to many shrines.

We made our flower offerings and turned to go back to the monastery. I carried a few leaves and flowers with me. We had not gone far, when from nowhere

came a big bull and began to eat them, and whatever the bull could not get, a monkey suddenly descending from a housetop ran away with.

Said I to the holy man, "This is a funny thing! When I was carrying these to the temple, no animal bothered us, but now that we are taking the flowers home, they are upon every pilgrim."

The holy man laughed and said, "These fellows know. Now that the Gods have had their offering, the rest belongs to the animals. The animals always know when the offerings are going to the temple; and they never disturb the devotees. But they rarely let pass anybody with greens or fruit on his way home from the Temple."

"The beasts have psychic powers, then," I retorted.

"If I were you, my friend, I would consider Benares as a psychic reality, and not a physical one at all," said the Holy one still smiling.

As if this was significant, wherever we went from that time on, we saw more than others do. The next morning when Mr. Eagles and I went by boat to see the burning of the dead, we both experienced a strange illusion. We sensed the passing of white vestured people above the cremation grounds. But was it our illusion? Or, did we really see them? These must have been souls of the dead who were impinging upon our consciousness. Anyway, the illusion, if it were one, did not last long.

Again, when we went to the bathing places, we felt the people bathing not in water, but in what seemed another current less gross and palpable. This not only

puzzled, but troubled us, and we asked the holy man later in the day to explain the matter. His eyes filled with a kind expression. Slowly his lips moved to explain.

"In this city of the Gods, there is but one reality—that is the reality of what men think. People come here to think. They approach this place thinking of the sanctities. Also many spiritual thinkers live here. There are men and women here who are truly holy. Their presence creates a consciousness which continually purifies the minds of the pilgrims. Why is it that we have no pestilences ravaging Benares? There is a force here so strong that it heals. Very rarely are people sick. Individuals do fall ill, but not in numbers.

"Compare this with any other city of India, and you will be amazed how healthful is Benares. Scores of families come from every part of India to recuperate their health here. This is a health resort for innumerable Bengali families who are suffering from strange diseases. What heals them is not the tottering old town, but the thoughts that possess it. Yet healing is not our problem. We never think of it. What we indeed wish to do is to heal souls of their distress, and of that terrible sin, namely, the thought that they have sinned. There is no worse sin in the universe than the thought of sinning."

It was growing very dark. The blue dusk hung in a curtain of stillness on the city. Softly the stars flew across the sky. Silence spread over the earth like the bloom on a fruit.

The next day we spent at Saranath in the Deer Park

where Buddha lived and preached. Benares it is said, stands on the same site where it was built three thousand years ago. Saranath was a prosperous suburb of Benares two thousand years ago. Here an enormous stupa was built by the people to commemorate that Master's many visits. It is said that when Buddha met the skeptics on his way from Gaya who refused to believe that he had obtained illumination, he told them that he would go to Benares and beat the drum of immortality. He began his preaching at Saranath.

It seems that throughout the ages all the saints of India have gone to Benares at one time or another and beat its drum of immortality. This drum is the consciousness of the Hindu race whose very center is the city.

In Saranath we saw some mammoth statues of the Buddha. Many of them were half feminine and half masculine. On our asking one of the pilgrims there why the Buddha was represented as effeminate, we were told that Buddha embodies the perfection of the two sexes, male and female, and that therefore his image must combine the virility of man with the grace of woman.

Photo courtesy Johnston & Hoffman, Calcutta.

A group of women (right of the reader) and men (left of the reader) listening to a bazar reader of the Ramayana in Benares.

CHAPTER XXXIV

MR. EAGLES WANDERS ALONE IN BENARES

INSTEAD of depending entirely on my interpretations, Mr. Eagles wandered about alone. By now he had acquired a strange habit of knowing things. He would go to a place and sit still. It might be days before he would tell me what he had seen or heard. The following from his letter to his family in America will enlighten the reader.

"The holy man answered all my questions, and one day as a great favor he took me to the House of Silence. Here I met not one holy man, but many Lamas from Thibet, Souffis from Persia, Foongis from Burma, and holy men from all parts of India. There was even a pilgrim from Japan.

"Silently these people come and go out of the place. Judging by its outward appearance the building is old and dilapidated. Its cornices are filled with blue and white pigeons. Inside is nothing but stillness. I had the impression that only the powerful and most saintly could enter here. Not a man like myself. Yet when I entered, everyone seemed to know who I was, where I came from, and why I had come.

"One fellow said to me, 'Where you come from is the place the Gods have chosen to take the seeds of the

East and the West and fling them broadcast. But the soil does not know yet what rôle the gods have assigned to it.'

"I didn't understand what all that meant, but I believe that our influence on the eastern coast of Asia is just as great as our influence on Europe, and so I will leave that prophecy as the holy man made it. But, to tell you the truth, these men in the House of Silence did not say much. They suggested things to me in a curious way. I seemed to sit there for hours at a time and understand everything said and unsaid. Some of them spoke no English, but that did not matter since none of us spoke much.

"Before we left the other night, I asked our own holy man the question I have asked of others. His and his manner of answering were very different from theirs. He acted as if he were a bird of prey. Every time I asked a question he would fly away from it like an eagle, then fall upon it from a great height. It was very interesting—his way of approach. However, the only statement of his that will interest anyone else but myself is about the conflict between the British and the Hindus.

" 'The ancient races have either perished or given up the psychic reality of their past,' he said. 'But we have remained true to our past—not in the historical sense, but in the spiritual sense. India has never spurned any other race when it brought her spiritual gifts. You saw in the House of Silence the Sufi holy man who is a Mohammedan. You beheld the Foongi, a Buddhist holy man. You spoke to a Christian holy man, Hira-

nando. Now what does this signify? It means a bringing together of all religions through one spiritual experience. On all sides we see in India the mingling of religions. The Hindu community, the five million Christians, the seventy million Mohammedans, the twelve million Buddhists—they are all becoming less and less religious. At the same time they are becoming more and more spiritual.

" 'If you see two young boys comparing one another's stature and contending that one of them is taller than the other, you will be able to convey to them the truth: one of them is either taller or shorter than the other. But suppose you climb up the steeple of this temple and look down on the two boys. Their relative stature will cease to have any importance to you. Why? Because you have risen above them. Similarly the consciousness of India is rising above religions. The relative importance of all creeds is vanishing. People that make their living by teaching creeds are finding it very unprofitable nowadays. God-professors are being discarded because God-consciousness is being attained. As there are seven colors in the single white light of the sun, so the spiritual experience of Hindu mankind contains all the seven religions of the world.

" 'This is not only true of religion, but this relation of standard is applied in India to other things. Gandhi is applying it to politics as you have already noted. Similarly, men like Sir J. C. Bose are using it in science; and poets like Tagore in literature. As the tides only emphasize the urge of the river to the sea, so in the conflict between the Europeans and the Hindus I see in

India only the reiteration of a spiritual need. In Benares, my brother, you have tasted the truth of this fact. Now, go to the West where you belong and achieve your salvation alone. Religions may be needed for those who have not seen God. Until the house is built a scaffold is needed. Once the house is completed, the scaffolding falls away. You may need religion to start you, but once the palace of God-consciousness is built, all religions will be cast away like scaffolding, unnecessary and unimportant.' "

CHAPTER XXXV

FAKIRS OF BENARES CITY

AFTER half an hour of philosophy I hunger for the common things of life," the holy man of my boyhood used to say.

So after the strenuous philosophic days with the Saint in Benares, I invited Mr. Eagles to visit the fakirs in the holy city. We passed the residential districts on our way and reached the temple of Beni Madhav. This was originally a Hindu temple dating from the first century, but when the Mohammedans gained complete ascendency in the 17th century in northern India, they decided to smash the old temple in order to erect with its bricks and stones the glory of a mosque to Allah. It is said that before they could reach the proper point from which to hurl their battering rams against the ancient structure, they had to hack their way through thousands of white-clad Brahmins.

With prayers on their lips and weaponless hands, the Brahmins faced the onslaught of the Mussulmans! Strange though it may seem, that wholesale slaughter of the priests produced its effect later.

After the temple had been broken down the mosque was erected in its place. But such is the power of sacrifice that the new house of Allah bears to this day a Hindu name—the tower of (Beni Madhav) Shiva.

As we passed it we noticed and praised its beauty and architectural cunning. From the mosque, Beni Madhav, we went past a procession of students going to the Hindu University. Dressed in flowing robes and white turbans like young Romans, they drew after them their heliotrope and ash-colored shawls, worn toga-fashion, and blown by the breeze.

Finally we descended to the temple of Viswanath, the central shrine of Benares. This was built to house Shiva after the Mohammedans had destroyed the God's old home, Beni Madhav. The present shrine is nondescript in color and character. If a stranger were to notice it he would never take it for the most important of all shrines. The appearance of the temple is negligible compared with its psychic reality. It is the Vatican chapel of the church of Hinduism. Here, the highest Brahmin of India has to worship humbly as a child. Here, women and men from all the provinces of India, from Thibet, Afghanistan, South Africa, America, and the Philippines come to worship. The power that all the pilgrims create by centering their hopes of salvation in this shrine cannot be measured.

As Mr. Eagles expressed it, "Say what you like against worshiping stones. I am convinced that men make God by their adoration. Look at the in-going pilgrims; not one face shows illumination. But after spending ten minutes there, before that stone, many of them come out as illuminated beings from another world. Can you by the light on those faces say that they are the same people that went in? Each one has put on the mantle of ecstasy, as your guru phrases it."

Though it gave me pleasure to hear Mr. Eagles speak

such glowing words, today my mind was not interested in spiritual life, and God's glory. I was eagerly looking for the fakirs, those vultures of religion, who live by exploiting the pilgrims' generosity and credulity.

At last we reached the ghaut on whose terrace they assembled. There they were, sly as foxes and naïve as babies. Seeing us come, one fellow lay down on the road and began to beat his chest with both fists. He clamored, "O stranger, O foreigner, have pity on one whose intestines are eaten by remorse. I committed grave sins. Now I chastize myself in public in order to atone for them. Have pity on a sinful one! Keep me alive with your charity so that I may suffer longer for my wickedness."

Mr. Eagles was so touched by this painful tale that he gave him ten cents in Indian money. The moment the rascal had got his pittance, he sat up erect and ceased his lamentations.

The next man we came to was a long-haired, profusely bearded fakir sitting on a bed of nails.

"Ho, old friend, do you recognize us?" I asked.

"Indeed, I do, particularly your foreign companion who gives alms like a king."

"How much does he want now?" asked Mr. Eagles. "Are you cured?"

"My nail-poisoning is healed," answered the fakir, "but give me just one rupee. After all, I am an old acquaintance."

"I will give you more, if you tell us why you do this thing. Do you not feel pain? Sitting on ends of nails cannot be pleasant," hazarded Mr. Eagles.

"For two more rupees, I will enlighten you," bar-

gained the rogue. "I told you much in our native village. But I will tell you more, if you pay."

"Done," agreed Mr. Eagles, the heart of generosity. "I will give three rupees."

"You see, O Thunder of charity," began the adroit fakir, "no money can be made by serving the 'Sirkar,' the government. Men with college degrees hardly make thirty-five rupees a month. Can any self-respecting man take such a paltry salary when he is burdened with wife and children? I ask you."

"Nehi, nehi, beshak—no, of course not," we agreed. "Yet thousands of Indian college graduates are doing it," I added.

The fakir's eyes blazed with indignation. He resumed his talk, "I could not sit in a fly-covered room in a city earning so little by working nine hours a day. No, the day was not given to man to toil like a donkey, but to explore the realms of fancy. So I came hither. I examined the seats of all nail-sitters, all fire-walkers, and other fakirs whom foreigners call holy men. The imbecility of alien visitors is a good thing! At last I went to a nail-sitter and begged him to teach me the art of sitting on sharp steel."

"You mean you chose your career?" asked my American friend.

"Yes, O Sea of benevolence," he flattered Mr. Eagles. "I not only chose my harsh career, for harsh it is, but I found a good teacher, a man who would not brook any carelessness on my part. He was kindness itself. Without charging a penny he showed me how to rub my person with oil and a special kind of herb-

juice. After these had numbed my sensitiveness, he ordered me to take my place. At first I sat in gingerly fashion on my bed of iron thorns. I had one made for me."

"What do you mean?" we asked.

"There are five families of smiths here," he answered, "who make their living by manufacturing these beds of pikes."

"Quite an industry. Needs no protective tariff, I take it," remarked Mr. Eagles.

Without noticing my friend, the fakir continued. "The numbness of my senses wrought by drugs lasted three hours. Since that first experience of mine I made it a rule to sit here two hours every morning—rather a long time. It seems long when you sit on nails."

"How long do you sit now?" I asked.

"Never more than two hours in the morning, and sometimes an hour before sundown, which requires an extra expenditure of oil, herb-juice, and rubbing. . . . It all depends on the nature of my market. If the pilgrims are very numerous and if they are eager to pay me, I sit on this bed of pikes three hours in the afternoon sometimes. But as a rule I make enough in the two hours' time I spend in the morning. Then I knock off work."

"How long did it take you to master this art? Do you use any drugs now?" asked Mr. Eagles, eager to know the fakir's trade secret.

"I mastered my art in a month's time. I take every precaution now. After all I am no fool. Though my person is full of callouses, yet it is wise to be careful.

One day last month I did not rub myself carefully with herb-juice before sitting down. Lo, I was scratched by a nail. I had to go to our village doctor for a few days. That was when you beheld me, sir, in our native village, hiding from the Benares public. It would not do to let them know that I have been sick. This public is mean-minded. If they find out that we, the nail-sitters, are liable to be sick, they won't patronize us. It is a hard life that we lead."

"How much do you make a day?" asked Mr. Eagles.

"To be truthful, sir," the rascal answered demurely, "I make in two hours nearly what a college graduate clerk acquires in fifteen days in a government office. It is not a bad trade—besides the hardships that we undergo are genuine."

Now Mr. Eagles paid his stipulated price, and asked him the last question: "Are you holy?"

"Toba, toba—pig, pig!" shouted the fakir. "Why *should* I be holy? I am an honest nail-sitter. What need have I to be holy? Now, sir, holiness is what I do not like."

"But, surely," I remarked, "some people mistake you for a holy man."

"Not many of our own people, friend," he answered simply. "It is always the foreign fools that consider men of my ilk holy. Every Vilaity, European, pays me in order to photograph me. He generally calls me holy. But though foreigners make mistakes—all the same their hearts are generous. Bring more like this friend of yours to see me! Sir, you are the Himalaya of kindness."

By now the place was filling up with pilgrims. In order to exploit them, snake-charmers were plying their trade near by, as we could tell by the noise of their flute-playing. Beggar after beggar, lying or sitting beside the road beat his chest with his own fists. Some plucked out tufts of hair—false hair—in repenting for their past sins. Still others shut their eyes and sat playing blind men, thus rousing the pity of the public. Money fell in their begging bowls merrily.

We noticed one peasant pilgrim who, before making his gift, blew into a blind fellow's eyes several times in order to make sure that his alms were given to a genuine Andha (sightless man). Naturally the actor played his part well, no matter how hard the peasant blew. Then when the peasant had gone by, he picked up the coin and put it in his mouth. After biting the copper piece and making sure the coin given him in honest charity was real and no product of counterfeiting, he spat it back into the bowl surreptitiously.

"O divine Benares," exclaimed Mr. Eagles, "I love thee for thy humanity. What a city! Indeed it is holy."

Just then came into sight two foreigners whose faces were unmistakable. Walking before a group of ochre-clad monks, two biscuit-colored Americans drew into sight.

"Hullo," announced Mr. Eagles, "here are Ananda and Mrs. Bolt again. Well, well, where have you been? Ananda, my boy, do you know any more about your previous incarnation than you did when you left the Karle cave?"

In a melancholy tone, Mrs. Bolt answered for her son. "Not yet. Nothing has been revealed to us."

"What are you doing here?" I asked.

After pointing at the blind, the maimed, the nail-sitter and other fakirs, she said, "Taking pictures of these holy men."

Mr. Eagles groaned.

"What is that?" questioned the boy, Ananda.

In order to divert them all, I shouted so that every one could hear, "We must see the snake-charmers."

Fortunately there was no more talk of holy men. Later Mr. Eagles went with the boy and Mrs. Bolt to luncheon at the hotel where the latter were staying.

That day during the noon-meal in the monastery I asked the holy man, "Why do we have to have so many fakirs whom foreigners take for holy?"

That closed mouth of Kalika assumed a diabolical smile. His eyes grew sarcastic and they seemed to regard me contemptuously. His voice however was kindly and even-toned: "My son, if those frauds were not posing as holy for the multitudes without, how could we maintain the science of holiness within? If those fakirs did not engage their attention all that crowd looking for diversion would come here and would destroy our privacy and solitude, and our solitude lost, our work would be lost also. The other day an eminent Viennese botanist came here to think in peace. He gave me as his reason that in Europe he was exposed to reporters for the newspapers, and many curiosity-stung ladies.

"Here in India the true holy men who are our spiritual botanists, so to speak, have kept their solitude in-

tact, because these fakirs and tricksters engage and hold the attention of the solitude-destroying crowd. Instead of criticizing, we should be grateful to them. They are holy only to foreigners and to a very few of our own people. Let them remain so. Besides, every profession has its modicum of quacks and other parasites. Why expect the profession of holiness to be exempt from these blights?"

In the afternoon during tea, when Mr. Eagles returned to the Rama Krishna monastery, he announced that Mrs. Bolt and Ananda had begged him and he had consented to take them with us through Agra and Delhi. I was glad to hear of this, for I thought it would do Mr. Eagles good to have some of his own countrymen with him for a change.

After making all plans to meet Ananda and his mother at Agra in several days' time, Mr. Eagles and I paid a flying visit to the city of Lucknow.

CHAPTER XXXVI

LUCKNOW

IN this city famous in British history for the siege and victory in 1858, Mr. Eagles and I met Gandhi's right-hand man, young Jawaharlal Nehru, son of the old Motilal, who is now the President of the Indian Nationalist party. We met him in the house of a friend named Narain, a very prosperous lawyer.

Nehru conducted us through the seventeenth century city and told us of its past.

Here are gigantic historical structures built by the Moguls: high Moorish gates and vast Moorish houses. The streets are filled with song. People sing everywhere. Mr. Eagles discovered a flower vendor who, wishing to sell him a rose, said, "This is fragrant as the breath of Leila (the Eastern Juliet) and young as the love of Majnun (the Indian Romeo)." And the fellow continued to improvise songs while we listened.

The same thing happened at a brass-worker's house. Mr. Eagles wanted to buy some very beautiful brass. For every piece there was a song. "This one is a cup and I have named it 'The Peacock' for it stands on a long slender stem haughty as that bird. That one I have called the 'Cradle of the Lightning'—the design of a dragon flashes and breaks as the lightning against the

clouds: so the cloud must be of gun metal and the dragon of silver."

"What is this one?" I picked up a horse made of brass.

"Oh, that! That has no name as yet, but if you like we can give it one."

And he called it "The Humbler of the Storm."

All the artisans were really full of poetry, and so were their servants. Even the man who was selling water from a little cask said, "This water will slake the thirst of a desert. It is pure as a babe's eyes. Drink, O people, and find out that it is as good as milk!"

I asked Mr. Nehru to explain the town. He said in answer, "All the learning of the Moguls went to seed here. This place is saturated with their decadent culture."

Now we came to the great towers of the observatory which were built by the Moguls in the sixteenth century. Later they were broken and bruised by conquerors and time. But when night came and the stars tiptoed into sight, one could feel the immense sorcery of the heavens from this place. Why is it that almost all the Mogul rulers of India enjoyed scanning the heavens at night?

CHAPTER XXXVII

ALLAHABAD, A HOLY CITY

FROM Lucknow we were taken to Allahabad by Jawaharlal Nehru. As a place of pilgrimage it is second only to Benares. Even in mythological times it was sacred. Valmiki in the Ramayana mentions "Jata Kritwa stata rejanschira valkala dharinau gangam uttirya tau virau Prayagavi Mukhau gata—there, after their ascetic ceremony, the two heroes went, beyond the entrance of Prayaga where the two rivers, Ganges and Jamuna, are locked in a single embrace."

At Prayoga we stayed with the Nehrus in their great house, Anand Bhawan, a mansion of stately stone and carved wood. Ever since he saw Pundit Motilal Nehru preside over the Congress of Calcutta, Mr. Eagles had been eager to know the old gentleman intimately. He wanted to learn how such a rich man and keen-minded lawyer ever came to renounce everything in order to follow Mahatma Gandhi. He made more than a gesture of renunciation; for both the old Pundit and his eldest child, Jawaharlal, had suffered imprisonment and other indignities for their beliefs and actions.

"But why is Allahabad so sacred?" Mr. Eagles wanted to know as we walked past the British fortifications whose guns watch over the confluence of the black Jamuna and the white Ganges.

Pundit Motilal Nehru, President of the Indian National Congress, faces the camera, standing with his wife and daughter.

"Because of the meeting of the two most sacred rivers of India the city is considered very holy. Hence people gave it the Hindu name Prayaga. But when the Mohammedans conquered India they renamed the place Allahabad, City of God, still in keeping with the sanctity associated with the spot. The heroes of the Hindu Iliad, Rama and Lakshmana, crossed at Prayaga and the place where they had forded the rivers was considered holy. Also near this place lay the Buddhist stupa of Bharhut, most of whose remains have been transferred to the Museum of Calcutta in recent years.

It is also true that the Greek Megasthenes, the first important European author to write of India or things Indian, stopped at Prayaga for a season. Alexander the Great was planning to come to this spot when he was called away to the west for strategic reasons.

In other words, "Prayaga Muokham," the entrance of Allahabad as the Ramayana phrased it, is of abundant mythological, historical, and archaeological import. Hindus from the first year of their written history have come by millions to bathe in the confluence of the two rivers. Even now when interest in religion has slackened, every twelve years nearly ten million people bathe here in Kumbha Mela during a particular week which the Brahmins arbitrarily proclaim to be holy. The Brahmins still believe that if they call a certain time sacred, it becomes so at once. "It is the incantation pronounced by a Brahmin that invests any material thing with immutable spirituality," they say in their abundant spiritual arrogance.

After my first day in Allahabad I was obliged to go to Agra to meet Mrs. Bolt and her son as arranged beforehand. For Mr. Eagles who had planned to be there too suddenly decided to stay a couple of days longer with the Nehrus at Ananda Bhawan.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

AGRA

BY one single feature of the cities west of Benares I could tell that I was in northern India. It was the absence of unveiled women from public places. In southern India wherever we went, we beheld men and unveiled women. But now we were in the north where the Mohammedans form the bulk of the population and the Mohammedan custom of Purdah prevails. Seclusion of Mohammedan women is severely enforced. Following the example of the Moslems the Hindu minority in their midst practices Purdah more or less. My entire journey I spent thinking and comparing impressions of the Hindu-dominated South and the Moslem-dominated northern India. Even the arts were different. Before I had come to any conclusion about how to combine the Hindu with the Mohammedan Hindustanis, my train pulled into the station at Agra where Mrs. Bolt and Ananda received me.

If Benares is the Rome of India, Agra is its Florence. In Rome what counts most is not a man but an age of history. The same observation holds true of Benares, the divine city.

Since the space at our disposal will not permit our tracing the numerous parallels between Agra and Flor-

ence, the reader will have to content himself with the most important one. From Agra came the most personal art of Islam. Does not that remind him of Florence whence issued the most personal Christian poem, the Divine Comedy? Because a noble youth saw the face of his beloved near a bridge in Florence, Christendom was startled to a new sense of Beauty. Similarly, the most personal piece of architecture in the world was reared because a man loved a woman in Agra.

Alas, northern India, including Agra and Delhi, have been written about by so many English writers that I prefer to be brief if not silent on many important works of art and architecture in these regions.

In order to disabuse Ananda's mind of ideas derived from untrustworthy foreign books I told him very simply the folk history of the Taj Mahal as we wandered towards it on our second day in Agra.

[1] "As you stand close to it, you realize how high it soars above this world, yet its roots are buried in the soil of our everyday life. You look down, it becomes as intimate as the face of your beloved; when you look up, an exquisite ache grips your heart, for you fear that such an unearthly vision is bound to fly away any moment to the skies whence it came. The wonder of untainted whiteness shivers as breath upon breath of awakening colors broider its edges. Like the trembling of the wings of a dragon-fly, delicate and intensely clear tones hover over the entire edifice. The fountains stop their sobbing. The last notes of a bird die in the distance. Nothing stirs. Lo, now the Taj wrapped in ves-

[1] From "Ghond the Hunter," published by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.

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The Glory and Splendor of Shah Jehan's India. The beautiful Khas Mahal at Agra, India, and farther up the Jumna River is the glorious Taj Mahal of the Emperor Shah Jahan, built in 1632.

The Taj seen from the Jasmine Tower, whence its creator viewed it.

tures of glimmering silence sits on the throne of night. All this color glowing like the cheek of a bride, whence comes it? Is it the risen moon that has lifted the white veil of death and revealed to your startled eyes the face of your love—Mam Taj Mahal? Hour after hour her presence works its enchantment on you. She is no more dead. She responds to you as if you had touched her hand. Suddenly rushes upon you the realization that Immortality has torn and thrown away the veil of death, and thrust upon you its terrible splendor. What you see now is no more a speechless stone, for it is tongued with Truth.

" 'Yea, I shall live if you remember,' you hear the marble say to you, as spoke the Empress Mam Taj Mahal to her distracted husband while she lay on her death-bed more than three hundred years ago. You can also hear his answer coming out of your own throat, 'Yea, the whole world will remember.'

"No sooner had Emperor Shah Jehan spoken those words than her body released her heaven-hungry soul. Then he too was stricken by a fell disease and from that time on, he lay in his invalid's bed in the Jasmine Tower and dreamt how best to preserve her memory. Not only he, her husband, but also the whole world, needed a perfect chalice to hold the beauty of her face.

"After six years of meditation in the Jasmine Tower he saw in a vision the turrets and the dome of the Taj Mahal. In order not to lose any time, he smote the silver gong that hung by his bedside. Attendants rushed to answer his call. 'Send for all the architects of the world. I have found it, I have found it. Naksa, naksa!

Bring me parchment and ink, let me copy it ere it steals out of my memory.'

"He drew day and night while architects gathered around him and watched him make the plan of the mausoleum. Their eyes marveled at the vision while it rose black line by black line, curve on curve as the emperor's pen coursed on the white parchment. Their hearts quailed at the thought of the time and wealth the building would cost. But the emperor was adamant.

" 'Fourteen years and seventeen thousand men at work every day, say you! So shall it be. Empty the coffers of the state, plunder my private treasury. But build! Let workmen come from India, China, Persia, Egypt, Ceylon, Italy, nay, invite the whole world to consecrate my dream.'

"Not only foreign workmen came with their tools but the Indians themselves went out in flocks to fetch the precious stones necessary for the work of the mosaic. They crossed the Himalayas to China for jade, green as the eyes of spring; and penetrated with caravans into the Egyptian desert for the perfect cat's-eyes. They disemboweled half of Burma for rubies, and exhausted Damascus of its amber beads. Lapis and onyx came from Italy; while agate, garnet, and moonstones streamed from the confines of the southern seas.

"Though he was terribly ill, Shah Jehan never surrendered. He lived on by the strength of his purpose, month by month, year by year, till the structure rose and fulfilled his dream. The day the empress was buried under it, he lay in his all too familiar bed of illness and heard the cannon boom its last and final salute to

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Street scene, Agra, outside the Taj.

the interment of the Mam Taj. Then he said: 'I come, beloved, I come—to lie beside you.' Alas, death that had taken her would not take him when he wished. For a few years he lingered more dead than alive, but at last when his time came he was buried next to her."

CHAPTER XXXIX

FATEHPORE SIKRI

IN another day's time Mr. Eagles joined us. Since the Nehrus of Allahabad had told him not to miss Fatehpore no sooner had he arrived than we were urged to plan a visit to the old city built by Emperor Akbar. "Jawaharlal gave me Mrs. Sitwell's book," said Mr. Eagles. "In it I read a marvelous description of the rose-red city of the greatest Mogul. Let us go there tomorrow. We must not fail to see it."

The strange part of our visit to the deserted city was that Mr. Eagles would not write down his own impressions of it; nor would he permit the privilege to the rest of us. He said, "Mrs. Sitwell has written the description of Fatehpore—city of Victory; there can be no other after hers. No one should attempt it. If you do, it will be a sacrilege."

"I agree with you," remarked Mrs. Bolt who had borrowed the book and read it. Little Ananda insisted that writing of any kind must be tiresome work.

So we visited the place under strict pledge that none record an impression.

After our visit when we returned to our car for our tiffin Mr. Eagles read to us from Mrs. Sitwell's "Flowers and Elephants." During the whole meal, instead of

music, we had "Flowers and Elephants." Mr. Eagles read:

"The rain poured down on Agra, on the noisy choking streets, on the colossal rose-red fort that seemed to sleep in its passive strength, on the mosques and minarets, on the shimmering Taj Mahal. It poured, too, with a deafening noise upon our hotel. Such storm-rain as that hypnotizes one—I stood and watched and felt it in a sort of trance—the water streaming off the roof, the flowers beaten down, the clouds torn again and again by swift blue lightning.

"All the morning it had been intolerably hot; I had wandered about my big room for hours trying to pack, continually sipping iced lemonade, and standing between any window and door where the tiniest draught moved. I had sat and looked out at the trees from the balcony. They were crowded with little parrots, tossing from branch to branch restlessly, and two bright blue jays sat perched on a dusty ledge. The red dust blew chokingly about the yard outside where the servants dozed in the shade. Then suddenly a wind began to blow, but fiery hot; the parched leaves fell pattering off the trees and the tawny dust danced round and round in little columns. Thunder rolled, and uneasily there fell heavy, heavy drops on to the roof. There seemed a breathless pause before the eager rain came splashing down. Even the parrots' quarreling had died away. How thick the rain fell! The dust became all at once red mud; the roads were little rivers with the drops falling into them.

"We had planned to go to Fatehpore Sikri, that dere-

lict city which the Emperor Akbar built. He built it on a ridge in an immense plain, upon a spot where no one but the saint Salim Chriti had lived until he founded his royal city, which after twenty-five years was utterly abandoned. It stands there still after these centuries; its mosques, its palaces, its Hall of Audience, its soaring pillars—perfect and stable.

"The motor that was to take us stood waiting under the hotel porch; it looked rather stranded and absurd in a sea of mud. Vehemently the rain poured on. Everyone said it was too wet to go. A dead city, they said, was cheerless enough on a fine day, bats hanging from dank ceilings and snakes in the rubble of old walls; in the pelting rain and thunder it would be altogether too depressing.

"Driving on down the broad road of Akbar's making we talked in a desultory way of the Mogul dynasty. I said it seemed odd that so little should be made of Akbar, who outshone all the most brilliant figures in history. He always thought of the whole, not of parts; his curiosity and energy would not let him rest in incompleteness. His life was an endless search. 'It is Thee I seek from temple to temple' was his constant thought. I said I would rather have seen him than any man who ever lived, excepting, perhaps, Saint Paul.

"' . . . Besides, in his (Akbar's) case the mere spectacle would have been wonderful enough; his pomp and ceremonial, his magnificent caprices—for instance, the games of chess with elephants and horses and wreathed children for pieces, moving about in the courtyard of black and white marble.'

"We had come at last to the outer walls, the gateways and the ruined fortifications of the city. The motor stopped by a deserted doorway and we got out. The storm was still raging, but in the distance; here the rain had ceased and the gaunt red palaces stood up wet and clear against the dark sky. Forked lightning ran and flickered behind the minarets and domes, but in the superb city itself nothing stirred. We went forward. Feeling small and shy, we walked across a great emptiness of courtyards shining with pools of rain. We went down colonnades and cloisters—past towers and terraces and tombs. Oppressively royal did the place seem even now in its desertion.

"I wonder if any other spot upon the earth is so deeply stamped with the mark of a single man? Akbar's virility and imaginativeness are seen everywhere—in the small austere chamber where he spent his short night, in the Hall of Audience where he debated with wise men of every religion, in his Mosque, in his Hospital, and in the small but exquisite Palace which he built for Birbal, his minstrel friend.

"Grass was now growing between the stones that pave the city, and nothing but the peacock's harsh cry of wet weather breaks the silence in which it lies. Having left my companion behind, I went on, moving quietly, half afraid of the sound of my own footsteps. Before me there rose the mother-of-pearl tomb erected for the Saint. Feeling muddy and damp, I stood looking at the shimmering shape, set like a pearl amongst the massive red walls, the dark wet paving-stones of the courtyard reflecting its milky sheen. It set me thinking

of that deep reverence for holiness that is always found in India. 'But even this is not the heart of the place,' I thought, and moved on uncertainly. A small uneasy wind had sprung up; I was feeling tired; a peculiar melancholy lay over everything, and I wanted to turn back. And then all at once I got there! I had come upon the Gate of Victory—a gateway crowning a vast flight of steps that descends into the plain. There is no road beyond, only a great spread of desolate land. I stood at the top of the steps; the glorious portal rising above me lifted its towers and cupolas high into a grey sky of drifting tattered clouds. A broad band of white marble inlaid with black Persian characters runs round the huge red span of the arch, and I remembered the words which Akbar had there engraved:

" 'Said Jesus, on whom be peace: The world is a bridge. Pass over it, but build no house therein. Who hopes for an hour hopes for Eternity. Spend the hour in prayer. The rest is unknown.'

"The damp air was soaked with quietness; below, smudged amongst the few trees were three little huts; the smoke of an evening fire trailed slowly up through the heavy atmosphere, and the smell of it came mingled with the poignant smell of wet earth. It was so still! yet less than four centuries ago this place had been full of brilliant life; men and women had poured jostling each other up and down the way where now only a peacock sat huddled on a wall. The plain, immense and forlorn, stretched away and away till the green crops faded into unsubstantial blue; India itself seemed to lie there before one. And those great steps, in how sub-

lime a fashion did they rise out of the plain—so enduring, and no one to use them—so magnificent, and no one to wonder!

"A door at the base of one of the towers stood open, and, going in, I found there was a twisting staircase let in the wall. I climbed up it, the crumbling plaster falling off in flakes as I went by, and presently I came out on to a marble balcony, which gleamed white after the rain. This was the place where Akbar used to sit in the evening and gaze out over his wide land. 'There were warm showery evenings then, as now,' I thought, 'making places intimate and tender; and he must have looked out upon a scene just like this.'

"I stood still for a long time, drenched in utter loneliness, thinking how 'age after age the tragic empires rise.' I remembered that not many years after his death Akbar's bones had been dug up and burnt and the ashes scattered to the wind. A chill wind blew round me now. Already the purplish web of dusk was blotting the distance out. It was time to leave. I waited a moment to watch a wet mongoose run across the steps far below, and then turned to go down the dark stairs again. As I went down in that blank silence fear struck me. I felt the past was merging with the present and might suddenly become tangible. I might see Akbar! When I got out into daylight again, I was trembling. The peacock, startled by my sudden appearance, fluttered clumsily off the wall with a grating cry. I fled away."

CHAPTER XL

DELHI, THE CAPITAL OF INDIA

MR. EAGLES having decided to stay on alone in Agra in order to see the Taj by himself I took Mrs. Bolt and Ananda to Delhi.

The word Dil means heart. And Delhi, pronounced Dilli, means the ravisher. It is the Paris of India. There is no place as gay as Dilli.

Just about the time when Julian the Apostate was in Paris Dilli was flourishing as the capital of northern India. When Paris began its life, its Indian peer was reaching its first decadence.

Time passed: About the seventh century a new-born Delhi again raised its head. Once more Hindu Kings ruled there. Then as Paris went under the rule of Britain and had to remain subject until after the coming of Joan of Arc, Delhi was taken from Prithvi Raj,[1] the last Hindu monarch, by the Mohammedans. Alas, unlike Paris, it was never reconquered. At the present moment it is the capital of the British in India.

Though the city has many first rate works of art, there is nothing in it so full of sentiment as the famous mausoleum of Agra. Yet there are things in Delhi that Agra can not surpass. For instance, "the Moti or Pearl Mosque" is the purest temple of worship that I have

[1] See "Caste and Outcast," published by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.

A Hindu gentleman and his wife.

seen. It was built by Shah Jehan's son, Aurangzeb. The latter was a Mohammedan bigot of the worst type. He never dared to build anything that did not enhance the prestige of Mohammedanism. He hated his father's love of beauty that was divorced from religion, so he built to celebrate the powers of Islam. All the same that mosque called Moti is exquisite as the hollow of a pearl.[1] It stands inside the Dewani Khash and Dewani Am, those two royal reception halls that Shah Jehan built. Both the Am and the Khash (inner and outer reception chambers) are marble pavilions whose arcade is full of nine-pointed arches, and whose marble pillars and ceilings wear magnificent mosaics of onyx and lapis lazuli, designed as flowers and foliage within, and curving of blades of chalcedony outside. And the utter restlessness of the design finds perfect rest in the harmony that all the colors, curves and points make when seen as a whole.

"There in a fabulous tropical garden bower of marble and semi-precious stones stood the peacock throne, a wizardry of gold and emerald, topaz and sapphire. And there only two hundred years ago sat enthroned the great Mogul with the largest diamond of the world, the Kohinoor, shining from his crown. Now, though that most precious throne is stolen and taken to a foreign land, and that diamond, too, the foreigner has taken away from India, the Dewani Khash and the Am still remain cooled by rushing water that has been running under them ever since Emperor Shah Jehan built them.

[1] Some say that Moti Masjid was built by Shah Jehan himself.

"And if you wish to dream, you may sit there and conjure up the splendors which even now are more sumptuous than anything that stands intact in all Northern India.

"Delhi also has a mosque built by Shah Jehan, a little over three hundred years ago. It is the Jumma or Friday Masjid, House of Worship. It is of thick slabs of red sandstone inlaid with large leaves of gold, a place of worship fit for emperors. The walls are thick as two elephants, and the arches are so numerous that one wonders that they were ever carved.

"Every Friday afternoon when the muezzin calls people to pray there, one feels like saying: 'All prayer is superfluous, brethren, in this house which itself is the most sumptuous gesture of a prayer.'

"The only thing that can surpass the Delhi of the Moguls is the old Delhi seven miles away from Jumma Masjid. How destroyed beauty surpasses living splendor we felt to the full when we went to the old Delhi the next day.

"It lay ruin upon ruin. Hindu palaces of ancient times were buried under the temple of Prithviraf of the Middle Ages. That in turn lay under the Mohammedan structures of the 13th and 15th centuries. They were all enclosed by a thick red wall pierced with tall arches. Among the destruction and the decay of the old Delhi stood one living splendor, floating like a banner to the sky. It is the commemoration steel pillar of strange combination of copper and steel full of inscriptions which glisten without any sign of decay. It has been standing in the open for two thousand years and has

not rusted yet.[1] It quickened my imagination to think that the ancient Hindus were masters of a secret that cannot be found out.

"After that steel column, what put ecstasy into my soul most powerfully was the vision of the burning blue sky caparisoning many miles of red sandstone broken here and there by shells hurled by the Hindus and the English during the war of 1857. As we trod on yellow and white ruins and went along that wall, suddenly we came to the foot of a very high arch. Where we stood we could not see its top, so we moved away walking backwards. Then as the red arms rose higher and higher and the top drew downward into view, lo, instead of meeting each other—they remained apart. The top was broken. And between those scarlet shoulders, instead of a point of sunlit red, the vibrant blue sky thrust itself like the breast of a peacock. The surprise of color and the shock of beauty was so great that I shut my eyes for a moment. Ever since, I have remained a slave of the ruins of ancient India, whether they be Fatehpore Sikri, that waste of sandstone and marble, or the deserted city of Amber, a garden of granite where tigers wander and yell and the eagles screech at noon. Ah, these old, old cities! Their broken walls are as broken bread and their torn roads are precious ancient shawls. Food and clothing they are to the spirit of Man!" [2] Delhi like Agra thrilled both Ananda and Mrs. Bolt.

[1] Like the art of mummifying the dead in Egypt, the Hindu art of creating rustless steel is dead and gone. Though many clever people have cut pieces off that metal pillar and sought for its secret by studying them, yet the wizardry of the old coppersmiths eludes them still.

[2] Taken from "Ghond the Hunter," published by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.

At last they had found in India what they wanted. They felt at home in the India of the seventeenth century. It was a delightful period. Ananda ceased to be bored and Mrs. Bolt was carried away by the marble magnificence of Delhi and Agra.

I can quite see why the northern art gripped them. Because all of it has a personal history. Taj Mahal told the story of human love in the most human manner. Fatehpore depicted the dream of Akbar who at the age of sixteen became master of India. Youth and human personality dominated everything we saw and heard.

Of course that is not the explanation the Bolts gave for their liking Delhi and Agra. Both of them held to the theory that they had lived in those days. They insisted that because they had lived in the seventeenth century amid those surroundings they liked them so much now. This explanation I can not dispute for I personally believe that I too existed before. Alas, nowhere on earth can I find the exact spot where I might have lived centuries ago.

However in the case of the Bolts the matter of reincarnation proved slightly ironic. For though they were avowed Buddhists they had never dwelt in the gentle age of Buddhism, but in the fierce grandeur of Islam.

* * * * * * *

From Delhi we accompanied Mrs. Bolt and Ananda as far west as Amritsar whence they went up to the state of Kashmere.

After they had gone Mr. Eagles and I missed them so that we felt depressed. Even the hundred and seventy

Women at The Golden Temple of Amritsar.

year old golden temple could not charm us to forgetfulness. Mr. Eagles said again and again, "I feel homesick for that boy Ananda."

"Ananda, yes," I emphasized. "I wish we could see the rest of India through that boy's eyes."

Since Amritsar reminded us all the time of the boy both of us decided to leave the place and start for the Hindu Kingdoms of Rajputana in the Great Indian Desert.

CHAPTER XLI

HINDU KINGDOMS OF RAJPUTANA

AFTER Amritsar we visited three kingdoms and a shrine in Rajputana: Juypora, Valar, Udaipore, and Mt. Abu. Mr. Eagles had letters of introduction to all the Maharajahs and since they spoke English, I did not have to accompany him anywhere.

Here are some excerpts from Mr. Eagles' diary: "Valar puzzles me. In this desert country, instead of digging for irrigation, the Maharajah builds very fine roads and insists that only those vehicles which have rubber tires can travel on them. Now this may please some mad lover of progress, but it is not sound to my practical mind. What they need is irrigation, not roads. I said so to the Maharajah. He dismissed it as so much American humor.

"Yesterday morning we went to shoot tigers. The Maharajah was peeved because there were not big enough tigers to shoot. However, he killed a little fellow and I was glad there was no more to destroy. . . .

"I notice one thing: here there is no conflict between English and Hindus. I who am sensitive to their emotions would be ill if I had to live in the British territory. I am really convinced that in the native states there is no race-conflict.

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Bazar and streets and houses of Juypore.

"Juypore [1] is a city after my own heart. The streets are straight. Imagine building an American city one hundred years before America became independent. And how well done! Rose-colored houses on two sides with a white road between, peacocks on housetops, blue throated pigeons on balconies and clouds of parrots flying in the air. I wish we could make our cities as beautiful as this. It can be done. Jeysingh did it four hundred years ago. Why not we, with our better technique of building!

"This morning there was a festival. The clan God was brought out from the inner shrine and displayed to the city. The whole town was one mass of colors—not many of our tame northern ones, but robes of scarlet combined with yellow turbans coiled on men's heads; saffron veiled women who drew cascades of orange as they trod the wide road. At the head of the procession a naked elephant. Next to him came an elephant with his head and back covered with silver, pearls, and scarlet. Behind him at a respectful distance marched fifty more elephants soft as crawling mice but majestic as cathedrals. Their caparisons of gold, silver and azure gleamed and streamed in the sun as they passed.

"If I were to symbolize India, it would be by picturing one of these royal elephants, dignified and silent. The last one that passed under my eyes was covered by a cloth of real gold. Then came the Maharajah, twenty horses drawing his chariot followed by the cavalry, exactly like the knights of the 14th century,

[1] Juypore, Jeypur, Jaipore, and Joypoor—all mean the same place.

on white horses. Now on a naked elephant appeared the silver shrine of the God with the sun just behind it. How clever the Hindu astrologers are! They chose the day when the sun would shine on this road at a certain angle so that when the shrine was brought out from the inner temple it would blaze with such fire that, too dazzled to look, the people would fall on their faces before it.

"If I had only had a moving picture camera with me I would have caught each person's face illumined by the expression of devotion. These phlegmatic, quiet countenances about me open like flowers in the sun before their deity!

* * * * * *

"About five in the afternoon I walked out in the same street. The glory was gone. Another kind of sorcery had swept the place. On the balconies people sat fanning themselves with peacock fans. Streets thronged with young noblemen in their purple and white togas, and slippers of vermilion. Shopkeepers were selling ivory and jade, sitting on cushions of saffron. It was a form of sorcery, but it was not the same thing as the mystical grandeur of the morning when the Sun God changed human beings into images of adoration. Now I am homesick, since I must leave this town. Can't bear to go. Homesick for this morning's experience which will never return.

"Udaipore—the oldest and most respected kingdom of India. The ruling house claims its descent from the Sun God. What a difference between this and the other

houses of Rajputana! This was never conquered by the Mohammedans. Even the English did not conquer it, and there is a quality about the kingdom that does not exist anywhere else. The people are no richer or sturdier than elsewhere in India, but there is in them that spirit of wholesomeness which is not to be found to the same extent in the other royal domains which I have seen.

"The Maharajah invited me to his palace on the lake. Those who have seen Venice may be surprised to find here something that may surpass Venice. There is a whole palace cooled by the waters of the lake. The Maharajah took me the other night to watch the moon in the water.

"Said he, 'My ancestors spent many nights learning tranquillity by looking at this spot. If the water is calm it reflects the whole moon. If a human being can be completely calm, he can reflect the Light of God.' "

CHAPTER XLII

DESERTED AMBER

IT was during our stay in Jeypore that we visited the old city of Amber which Jey Singh, the founder of Jeypore, abandoned. He moved the capital from his ancestral town to the "Pore" of his own building.

Mr. Eagles refused to write down his impression of Amber. He said, "This I can not depict on a piece of paper with black ink. You must excuse me if I leave almost all of the deserted city out of my diary."

At the risk of irritating my friend I am going to speak of our nocturnal visit to Amber.

* * * * * *

It was about ten in the evening that Mr. Eagles and I started for the old city. Since we rode an elephant the entire journey was accomplished in perfect silence.

Mr. Eagles remarked, "I will never forget this stillness as long as I live!"

Around us the darkness of the atmosphere was edged with a violet glow. Occasionally we heard in the distance the eerie call of camel caravans or the "meowing" of a tiger. Then there was silence fretted by the shifting of the sand under the elephant's feet.

The reader is entitled to know how we stayed on the elephant's back all night. The fact is that we did not.

Suddenly about one in the morning Mr. Eagles screamed, "This mattress is slipping."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"As a saddle slips bringing its rider under the horse this damn mattress will soon precipitate us under the elephant's belly."

"Ohé," I shouted in Hindi to the Mahout who was dozing seated on the elephant's neck. "Ohé!"

He heard me the second time. He answered, "Your shrieks will make even a lioness give birth to her child before the proper time. What abortion are you howling about."

"We are slipping under the elephant's belly," I screamed in terror.

"But the elephant is standing still. We have arrived, O lustre of the day."

If he had only said no more words. Instead in order to please us he ordered the elephant to kneel: "Dhut, dhut, dhut," he shouted. The elephant knelt quickly—spilling Mr. Eagles and myself on the sands of the Great Indian Desert.

"Whao, ho—don't crush them under thy belly!" I heard the Mahout admonishing his hati when I opened my eyes. "Don't sit on their faces thou hussy of a she-ass."

"Are you there?" I heard Mr. Eagles.

"Quite safe. And you?"

"Damn it!" My friend swore. "What are we to do now?"

As if he had understood what he had heard the Mahout praised Heaven: "Ho! You are safe. The God

of good fortune smileth on us." Then in a practical tone, "I will make your bed on the sand. You can sleep till daybreak. Amber is at its best in the morning light. I will rouse you just at the right moment."

* * * * * *

On our waking on the morrow what we beheld enchanted us. Towers and terraces stood there in the pale light of dawn. Amber though built nearly nine hundred years ago stands as if hewn out of an ageless hill by giants. Red sandstone walls, yellowing granite pediments, marble interiors carved like jewelry grew strata upon strata, rampart upon rampart, and parapet on parapet till they reached the very center of the sky.

Then all too swift tropic dawn turned into day. The sun from our right flooded the desolate city with light which seemed to sound like running water. The desolation of Amber was complete. As if encouraged by "the clamor of sunlight pawing on stone-flags" an eagle sprang up from his nest in one of the towers and screamed his salutation to the new-born day. The horses of a passing caravan neighed in the distance. Now our elephant lifted his trunk and trumpeted in his turn.

Yet the haughty echoes of Amber made no answer. Mr. Eagles remarked: "The place is perfect. There is nothing to compare with it. It is not a ruined town. It is dead. It surpasses even Sienna where modern civilization has been permitted to enter. Here the old guards its sanctities as a miser treasures his gold. It is the richest place in Rajputana—richest in solitude, and fierce with mysteries."

We spent the entire day wandering through the desolate streets and abandoned palaces. Strange as it may sound, decay has not touched Amber nearly as much as the other places of the same antiquity in India. Mr. Eagles repeatedly said, "The age of India usually intimates death, but here is age that is full of youth."

Swiftly the day passed. Night came drawing against the sky its caravan of stars.

Now our own imaginations could shed as much light as our feelings did. They revealed the ancient realities of the place more vividly than can be described by words spoken or written.

Amber should be seen at midnight. And the more darkness the better, for it enables us to people the place with those beings of our imagination who truly lived there.

"If a place is to be judged by its power to stretch our imagination," then abandoned Amber is second to none in the whole world.

CHAPTER XLIII

THE RAJPUT'S SENSE OF HONOR

IN order to convey to the reader the sense of honor that animated and still animates specially Udaipore's Rajput warriors I must quote the story of Queen Padmini, as I heard it when I was a boy. It is not an isolated tale but one of the heroic events of India in general and of the house of Udaipore in particular.

I heard it from a Rajput Rathor, and I shall endeavor to quote him accurately.

"In the fifteenth century when, in order to convert India into Islam the Mohammedans swept into our land it was our ancestors who saved Hinduism and the Hindus. While our saints kept up the vigil of communion with God, my ancestors, the warrior men and women, sacrificed themselves in battle.

"The Mohammedans went about killing the men in battle, and then attempted to capture the women, but the women burned themselves alive in order to escape from the conquerors. From that time on till the year 1832, which was the Indian span of Mohammedan rule, Indian women burned themselves alive as soon as their protectors died."

The Rathor continued, "Five hundred years ago our family went through the most terrible burning of its

women that had ever been known in all India. It was at a time when the Mohammedans came and laid siege to our mountain city. It was the heroism of a boy of sixteen that saved the situation. The Mohammedans had laid siege, but they could not conquer us. To the city they sent a messenger who said, 'We will not lift the siege until you give us one thing.' The Hindus asked, 'What is this thing that you want?' And the messenger replied, 'We want your queen as captive to take back as a present to our general and king.' " Even at this late date, Rathor's eyes gleamed with anger as he told the story.

He continued: "When the demand reached the ears of the queen, she remarked: 'It is indeed better that I should go, for then the siege will be raised from my people.' At this sentence the king was aghast. 'No!' he said. 'It shall not be!' But the queen was determined, 'It must be, my Lord. You are the people's king. I am their queen. As you have a duty to them, so also have I. As a king lives by sacrifice for his people, so also must I live and sacrifice myself for my people. I will go and no one can stop me.'

"The graybeards were called to the palace in consultation, but they could think of nothing wiser to be done. So on that very day in a litter the queen was borne out by eight young men and followed by three or four hundred palanquins, carrying her retinue of servants, such as her chamber maids and ladies-in-waiting. All the palanquin doors were shut and their windows were closed as the procession passed through the city gates and started out on their march.

"After six days they reached the capital of the Mohammedans in the north. The Mohammedan army entered the city with them and shut the city gates. For protection against battering rams their gates were covered with long sharp spikes about six inches in diameter which stuck out from every door. As soon as the last Mohammedan soldier and the last palanquin had entered the city, all these enormous spike-covered doors closed behind the queen and her retinue.

"But there is justice in this world, and woman's honor must be upheld. No sooner had the gates been closed than against the dusty distance could be seen the vast elephant cavalry of the Hindus coming in great haste to rescue their queen. As they came up to the city, they found that the spiked gates were closed and that the walls which were twenty feet tall and six feet thick were impossible to scale or to break down.

"The Mohammedan king and all his soldiers came up to receive the queen, and as her palanquin door was opened all the soldiers laid aside their arms. The queen of the Hindus stepped out and when they saw the marvel of her face, they were startled by the beauty and majesty of it. Then out of the other palanquins, which amounted to several hundred, leaped men who threw away their disguise as chamber maids and ladies-in-waiting, and attacked the Mohammedans. But these were only a few hundred men and a terrible carnage ensued, the noise of which could be heard outside the gates where the Hindu army faced the impregnable walls.

"The elephants tried to ram down the gates, but it

was impossible for them to do so because of the spikes. What was to be done? The noise and the clamor of battle was growing louder, and the shrieks and wails of the wounded could be heard from within. Everybody trembled. The elephants could not break down the walls.

"Suddenly my ancestor, whose name was Badal, a boy of nineteen, cried, 'I know the way.' And all the Hindu armies outside the Mohammedan city were staggered when they heard the trumpet ordering them to be silent.

" 'Oh, alas,' moaned the king, 'there is no way to win. The issue is lost. My few hundred people are being butchered within the walls of the Mohammedan city and my queen, too, will be killed.'

"But the boy cried, O king, I know a way. Let one elephant turn his back toward the city gate and then walk backwards, and by walking backwards he will bring his great weight against the gate and ram it down and we shall then be able to get into the city.'

" 'The spikes will hurt the elephant's back,' said the king, 'and then he will never dare overcome his hurt and beat those gates down.'

" 'But,' Badal replied, 'suppose we protect the elephant's back with something.'

" 'But with what, child?' asked the king.

"And Badal answered, 'We can bind something around the hindquarters of the elephant so that the sharp spikes will bury themselves in this. Then the elephant will be able to push and break down the gate. Otherwise, we cannot save the queen. I will climb up

and stand against the spikes with my back to them and the elephant seeing me there will walk backwards and will try to crush me against the door. The spikes will pierce me, but the elephant's back will be saved, and by being saved from pain, he will go on pushing till he opens the gate.'

"At this the king's face grew white with amazement, but he said not a word. Badal exclaimed, 'Break the silence, my Lord, let us do it while there is still time.' With one bound he leapt away from the king and the people saw that, in hardly the twinkle of an eye, he was standing against the spikes, facing the elephants. He cried, 'Give the word of command, my Lord.' But the king said, 'No.' Badal insisted. The king then ordered his own elephant to turn around and walk backwards.

"The elephant walked away from the gate and then turning with its back to the gate, walked slowly backward. The king shouted to his men to give the word, and the 'Mahout' whispered into the elephant's ear. The elephant stood there shivering as if in fear of being hurt, but the 'Mahout' howled like a clap of thunder. Then the elephant walked swiftly backwards and the smiling face of Badal was seen for a moment between the gate and the elephant's back. At this moment a terrible rain of crimson shot up into the air and the elephant trembled. The spikes had gone through Badal's body and cut the elephant, but the 'Mahout' kept yelling at him like thunder. Again the elephant gave a great push and suddenly the gates opened.

"With a great clamor the Hindu army was within

the gates, and they rushed into the city and rescued their queen, took many Mohammedans captive and went back to their own capital."

"But the history of Padmini does not end there. In two more years the Mohammedans came back in larger numbers. They were three to our one. But we Rathors, Chouhans, and Sheshodia clans of Rajputana never retreat. We die in the field of battle, as our women in the sacred flames if the tide of war turns against us.

"Alas, this time the gods of war were against us. We lost. There was not an able-bodied man of Udaipore Raj that did not die in battle. Having killed the fighters the Mohammedans stormed our castles. Now they madly rushed to the inner citadel to capture our women in order to make them slaves. Lo, this is what greeted their eyes. All the women had set the citadel on fire and flung themselves into the sacred flames. Thus did our women uphold their honor when our men had been slain in fierce fight.

"This happened many times in our history. It was the example of Padmini and her women that made the voluntary burning of widows a universal custom among the high caste Hindus of Northern India. Wherever the Mohammedans invaded, this practice came to prevail."

* * * * * *

Nowhere has the practice of Suttee been so fiercely adhered to as in Udaipore and its kindred clans. Mr. Eagles and I felt the presence of something excessively clear-cut and fine in this place. We sensed something noble and beautiful in the homes of the Rajputs. If

anyone goes there he should not stop with appreciating the outer beauty of Udaipore, but ought to enter a home or two in order to be acquainted with the spirit of the race.

After we had spent a week with a poor Sheshodia Rajput family Mr. Eagles remarked: "Now I know what really happened when Richard the Lion-Hearted and Robin Hood practiced chivalry. These folks of Udaipore are the finest flower of feudal nobility."

Photo courtesy Johnston & Hoffman, Calcutta.

Stone cut into lace. Dilwara Temple—interior of a tower at Abu Rajputana.

CHAPTER XLIV

UDAIPORE TO DILWARA AT MT. ABU

WHAT does Udaipore look like? Both Mr. Eagles and I stopped with the exclamation, "It beggars description."

"Jaisamand Lake! The lake, after the desolate desert country, was abruptly beautiful. A dam a thousand feet long descends by marble steps, guarded by wading marble elephants, to the brilliant water," says an American writer on approaching Udaipore. But one grows dumb once he is face to face with the islets in the lake where palaces rise like white lotuses, flamingo-red villas that descend to the water's edge like thirsty flocks, and the forests above them fierce with eagles, tigers, and black boars. Who dares put pen to paper before those fabulous feudal walls, bastions, and battlements where peacocks perch and aigrettes fly in white squalls!

* * * * * *

After Udaipore we found nothing so picturesque as the Dilwara Temple of Mt. Abu. Though it is not imposing looking from without, within it is a marvel of picturesqueness. "Stone cut into lace," Mr. Eagles described it.

That is all that anyone can say without appearing florid in speech. Dilwara should be seen, not read about.

CHAPTER XLV

BOMBAY ONCE MORE

THE last few days of our stay in India we spent in going to theatres and bazaars. We had done with art and we had finished with social and political revolutions. Now we were bent on touching the life of the people. So Mr. Eagles and I spent some time in Tardeo, the common people's quarters of Bombay.

Each night we went to one theatre or another where working men's plays are given. Since Mr. Eagles was interested in knowing one theatre thoroughly we gave special attention to the playhouse of Valha.

It was not a theatre, but a colony. Families of actors, musicians, and other theatrical people were living there in houses like barracks. They had a kitchen and a school. They had their priest and their own undertaker. The only schooling the children received was in the art of acting which is a very difficult art in India because the actors have to be dancers, singers, elocutionists, and gymnasts. It was most instructive to sit there morning after morning between ten and twelve and watch children of tender age contorting their bodies into the shapes of Nataraj and other gods.

Here was a girl trying to look like Parwati, the

mother of the Universe. Mr. Eagles asked her how she managed it. Her answer was that she meditated every evening before going to bed, and if she had meditated aright, she found that the next morning the sap of inspiration ran through her so that she could take on the shape of any goddess and hold the posture half an hour at a time.

Along with these youngsters the older actors went through certain gymnastics every day, paying especial attention to voice exercises. We found one old fellow every morning reciting Sanskrit. His name was Brihaspati, the Lord of the World. On being asked why he recited Sanskrit every day so accurately, he replied, "I am a God and all gods speak Sanskrit on the stage, and I have to create a godlike attitude before I can appear. The sound of the Sanskrit does that for me. I recite every night before going to bed and every morning during the study hours."

"What else do you do?" we asked him.

Brihaspati said, "I practice gestures."

This old man was the oldest of the community. He stood up and assumed one of those postures which some of the young Broadway persons would find very difficult, if not impossible to achieve.

But Brihaspati said, "Habit is character. My character is to be a god. I have built the habit."

That night when the musicians had taken their seats on a corner of the stage and after the audience had assembled, who were workers in the neighboring mills, the play began. The priest of the theatre came onto the stage and gave the invocation:

"Idam Kavirva Purwerva name vaka prasasmahe." (Having given praise to the poets of old, we now invoke the ancient one: the Word, the Supreme, who is the backbone of the universe, nay, the very measure of immortality.)

After that a pause followed and then he turned and said to the audience, "You will find in the play what you have brought with you."

The play began. It was wonderful to see an ancient Sanskrit play in modern version in India with all the ancient frescoes of Ajanta and the sculpture of Elura brought to life by the gestures and movements of hands, feet, and bodies of the actors and actresses.

After a few moments, Mr. Eagles remarked, "You don't need to write histories. These workmen are living history every day. The movements of their bodies are the same as existed in India centuries ago."

It gave me great pleasure to hear him talk in this way because I have always known it to be so and to find that a foreigner after so many weeks' sojourn could discover this truth of my country gave me great pleasure. Indians have never needed to write history as copiously as other races for we have not allowed our ancient past to die out, we live it today in our gestures and postures with which we undertake the commonest things of life.

If you do not believe this, visit India with me and see it with your own eyes.

This was the working-men's theatre. The real India exists among the peasants and the working men. There is no such reality to be found with the English-speaking

Hindus. They have lost their own past and they rarely acquire the past of the west. The Europeanised group of India is a lost generation.

Next day we paid our second visit to the caves of Elephanta. Everything looked familiar yet very strange. Mr. Eagles summed it up by saying, "I understand it better, and at the same time the strangeness has deepened too. The more we know, the more we augment the mystery of the unknowable."

Before we left the island a Deccani peasant called us. We followed him wherever he led. About half a mile to the east of the rock-cut temple he showed us a Hanuman—the monkey god, cut out of a piece of granite in recent years. Our guide sat down to meditate in front of that stone, and we followed his example.

Within thirty minutes he left us. But the expression on his face we shall never forget. If you can conceive the face of a city tough suddenly transformed into that of a saint then you have imagined what happened to this man's face after his meditation.

But that seemed to me less remarkable than the change which had come over Mr. Eagles. I cannot explain how or why his face had become dark yet illuminated. The light in his eyes was different. New lines, mostly vertical, appeared on his face. He looked like another man. There was a tranquillity in his eyes which had never been seen there before.

* * * * * *

The next day as we were steaming out of the harbor of Bombay, my friend said to me, "I wonder if you

will understand if I tell you that that fellow before the image of the monkey God showed me the truth of Life."

"No, I do not understand you," I replied.

Mr. Eagles pondered. Slowly he spoke. "I see. I cannot put it into words, but if you asked me now if I had seen God, I would say 'Yes.' I have seen through my past and I have pierced my present. My entire life takes on a purpose which I had never made explicit before."

"How did it happen?" I asked.

"I can't tell you. Sitting there with that peasant in the ancient island of Elephanta I felt a strange 'at-homeness.' I could touch any possibility and make it my own. I could stretch my arm and caress the horizon. I could lift my finger and touch the evening stars. I felt that India has given me new consciousness—what is it?"

Far off the lights of Bombay flickered like dwindling stars. Above us the heavens burned with silver. Around us were phosphorescent waters sobbing with a sense of delight. I wondered to myself if, after all, Mr. Eagles had not touched infinity.

THE END

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